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AUTHOR	Ignatz, Mila; Bauman, Gail; Byrd, Nancy
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ABSTRACT

This report describes achievements of the Accelerated School Project, a cooperative effort between two Florida school districts and the Florida A&M University to provide intensive educational services to at risk elementary students. The accelerated school approach focuses on transforming the entire school to produce high academic achievement for all students. Following an introductory chapter, the report reviews the historical development of the Florida A&M Accelerated Schools project. Characteristics of the four elementary schools involved are provided next. A section on project implementation reviews the accelerated schools process and the emphasis on powerful learning experiences. The vision statements of each of the four schools is followed by a summary of the project evaluation methodology. Results of the evaluation are reported as answers to six questions that address: (1) quality of program implementation; (2) degree of influence of the accelerated schools process on the participating schools; (3) changes in roles of involved parties; (4) impact on school management in participating schools; (5) student achievement gains; and (6) benefits and barriers that hinder or help the accelerated schools process. The report concludes that the approach has been integrated into the school culture and that its effectiveness is demonstrated by student achievement and effects on other stakeholders. (Contains 22 references.) (DB)

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ED 477 482

A Longitudinal Study of the Accelerated Schools Project in Northwest Florida

1993 - 2001

A School-College Partnership Between Schools in Gadsden and Leon School Districts and Florida A&M University

Submitted to:
The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation Excellence in Education Program

Prepared by:
Accelerated Schools Technical Assistance Site
College of Education
Florida A&M University
Tallahassee, Florida

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Florida A&M University
College of Education

Accelerated Schools Technical Assistance Site Staff

Dr. Mila Ignatz
Director

Dr. Gail Bauman
Associate Director, 1993-1998

Ms. Nancy Byrd
Associate Director, 1998-2001

Coaches:

Dr. Gail Bauman
Ms. Nancy Byrd
Ms. Maurine Daughan
Dr. Joel Dawson
Dr. Mila Ignatz
Ms. Sharon Thomas

Site Facilitators:

Ms. Wendy Barber, Bond Elementary School, 1995-1999
Ms. Debbie Batts, St. John Elementary School,1995-2001
Ms. Clara Hampton, Bond Elementary School, 1999-2000
Ms. Hilda Jackson, Havana Elementary School, 1997-2001
Dr. Verna Norris, Stewart St. Elementary School, 1997-2001

The Project Staff acknowledges the assistance of Dr. Gail Ogawa, Evaluator for the Leon County School Board, in the analysis and interpretation of data.

A Longitudinal Study of the Accelerated Schools Project in Northwest Florida

1993 – 2001

A School-College Partnership Between
Schools in Gadsden and Leon School Districts and
Florida A&M University

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THE ACCELERATED SCHOOLS PROJECT

INTRODUCTION

The Accelerated Schools Project is a unique educational innovation which has been implemented in many schools nationwide. Its uniqueness comes from the focus on improving the educational environment for at-risk students by emphasizing that all students can learn at an accelerated rate. In 1986, after an exhaustive study that found relatively little progress had been made in advancing the education of at-risk students in the previous 20 years, the Accelerated Schools movement was begun.

The Accelerated Schools Project (ASP) is a comprehensive approach to school change designed to improve schooling for all students, in particular, students in at-risk situations so that they enter the educational mainstream by the end of the elementary school or middle school. The basic premise of the process is that at-risk students must learn at a faster rate than more privileged students, not a slower rate that drags them farther and farther behind.

The Project was originally established at Stanford University by Dr. Henry Levin and has grown to include over 1000 schools nationwide.

The following three principles form the foundation for Accelerated Schools:

- **Unity of Purpose** involves the development and pursuit of a common vision that serves as a focal point for the efforts of the total school community including parents, teachers, staff, and students. The vision of an Accelerated School focuses on bringing children into the educational mainstream, where they can more fully benefit from school experiences and opportunities. The development and pursuit of this vision requires the combined efforts and commitment of all parties involved.

- **Empowerment with Responsibility** is needed to allow all stakeholders to make important decisions in fulfilling the school-wide vision. Such empowerment is critical if schools are to break the current stalemate in which administrators, teachers, parents, and students tend to blame each other as well as factors "beyond their control" for the poor educational outcomes of at-risk students. An accelerated school empowers stakeholders to make decisions, take responsibility for implementing those decisions and take responsibility for the outcomes of those decisions.

- **Building on Strengths** of school staff, students, parents, and communities, rather than their weaknesses, is a critical focus of an Accelerated School. Parents and teachers are underutilized resources in most schools. Parents want their children to succeed and can be powerful allies. Teachers bring the gifts of insight, intuition, and organizational acumen to the instructional process. By excluding them from decisions they ultimately must

implement, we leave these resources largely untapped. The strengths of at-risk students are often overlooked because they do not share all of the learning characteristics of middle-class students. Principals, whose roles are chiefly limited to implementing district directives, are also underutilized.

Underlying the accelerated school principles are a set of values which are necessary to create the culture for Accelerated School change:

- **equity.** All students can learn and have an equal right to a high quality education. All stakeholders have something to contribute towards improving student outcomes.
- **participation.** Students participate in learning; teachers, parents and the community participate in decision-making.
- **communication/community.** Students engage in more active and group learning. School staff and community work toward a shared purpose by meeting, talking, and learning from each others' experiences.
- **reflection.** Students engage in problem-solving exercises. Teachers and other adults constantly analyze the school environment and address challenges to school improvement.
- **experimentation.** Students are involved in discovery exercises. Teachers implement experimental programs as a result of communicating about and reflecting upon the school's challenges.
- **trust.** All members of the school community must believe in each other and focus on each other's strengths.
- **risk-taking.** All stakeholders must be entrepreneurial in their efforts. While some new programs may fail, the ones that succeed are the keys to lasting school improvement.

An Accelerated School is not just a conventional school with special programs grafted onto it. Rather it is a dynamic environment in which the entire school and its operations are transformed. The emphasis is on the school as a whole, rather than on a particular grade, curriculum, staff development approach, or other limited strategy. The goal is high academic achievement for ***all*** students.

School transformation takes place by setting in motion the Accelerated Schools Process and the implementation of powerful learning strategies.

States of Transformation

The first year process starts with a two-day ***launch*** period wherein the school community is introduced to the process and powerful learning.

It is followed by the ***taking stock*** stage. In this stage, the entire school community is involved in determining where they are so that they are better able to see where they want to be. At this stage they gather hard baseline qualitative and quantitative data on the strengths and challenges of the school such as student scores, school practices, teaching and learning strategies, discipline procedures, neighborhood characteristics, etc. This takes 3-5 months.

Once the school's status is known, the stakeholders decide what the school should become. At the **forging a vision** stage a shared vision is created which epitomizes the unity of purpose principle. This vision is what keeps everyone focused throughout the transformation of the school.

In the **setting priorities** stage the stakeholders participate in deciding what to do about the differences in the baseline information and the vision they have created. The challenge areas are prioritized and clustered into three or four priority areas and cadres addressing each of these priority areas are formed.

The next stage involves **establishing the governance structure**. Three governance levels include cadres, the steering committee and the School-As-A-Whole. The cadres are the working committees. They meet weekly to address challenge areas. The steering committee consists of the school administrators, the cadre facilitators, student, parent and community representatives. It serves as the clearinghouse of information and ensures that the cadres stay on track with the inquiry process. The School-As-A-Whole is the school community. It approves decisions by consensus put forth by the cadres following approval by the steering committee.

In the **inquiry stage**, the cadres focus on the problems at the heart of their challenge areas, brainstorm potential solutions, synthesize those solutions, pilot experimental programs, and evaluate those programs. This process is continuous and spiral.

Powerful Learning

Accelerated Schools focus on providing powerful learning experiences for all children. The experiences stress the development of higher order thinking skills, provide interdisciplinary links across common themes of inquiry, offer subject matter that is relevant to students' lives, and encourage students to be active participants in shaping learning.

Accelerated schools have demonstrated that children, irrespective of racial and socioeconomic background, can learn and succeed in school. The project has the overall purpose of creating the best schools for all children so that every child has the opportunity to succeed as a creative, critical and productive member of society.

Ultimately, the implementation of the Accelerated Schools principles, process and powerful learning strategies should result in ***all*** students learning at an accelerated rate, achieving their maximum potential, and feeling confident about themselves personally, socially, physically, and academically.

THE FLORIDA A&M UNIVERSITY ACCELERATED SCHOOLS PROJECT HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Early Stages

The Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) joined the Accelerated schools movement in 1993 through a grant from the Florida Department of Education. Two schools were selected for initial participation.

* Leon County
  Bond Elementary School
  2204 Saxon Street
  Tallahassee, Florida 32304
  (850) 488-7676

* Gadsden County
  St. John Elementary School
  4463 Bainbridge Hwy
  Quincy, Florida 32351
  (850) 627-3442

Three coaches were trained at the National Center for Accelerated Schools at Stanford University in July 1993. They were Dr. Mila Ignatz (Director), Dr. Gail Bauman and Dr. Joel Dawson. Dr. Ignatz and Dr. Bauman were faculty members at Florida A&M University. Dr. Joel Dawson was a Curriculum Specialist at the Leon County School Board. All three ooaches worked with Bond. Additionally, Drs. Ignatz and Bauman coached St. John Elementary.

During the developmental stages of the project, the primary goals for the project were:

1. to transform the two schools into Accelerated Schools.
2. to coach additional pilot Accelerated Schools.
3. to train and mentor new Accelerated Schools coaches.

A secondary goal was to support a network of coaches and Accelerated Schools in Florida.

Mrs. Barbara James, the Bond Elementary principal, became ill and was forced to take a leave of absence until the end of the school year 1994-95. Two interim principals served in her absence and supported the Accelerated Schools Project throughout the process. Ms. James stayed in close touch with school developments from her home as she recuperated.

By the end of the school year 1994-95 the two schools completed the stages of the Accelerated Schools process through the Setting Priorities stage and had embarked on the Inquiry Process to address their challenges. They had also received training and commenced implementing powerful learning strategies.

The coaches with the help of staff from Bond and St. John Elementary provided awareness sessions to other schools to invite them to join the national movement.

The Year of Expansion

In 1995 Florida A&M University received a grant from the Knight Foundation to sustain the initial efforts and to support expansion. Three additional schools joined the project at the beginning of the 1995-96 school year:

Gadsden County	Leon County	Gadsden County
Havana Elementary	Pineview Elementary	Stewart St. Elementary
705 U.S. 27 South	2230 Lake Bradford Rd	South Stewart St.
Havana, Florida 32333	Tallahassee, Florida 32304	Quincy, Florida 32351
(850) 539-6877	(850)488-2819	(850) 627-3145

Three additional coaches were trained at the National Center: Ms. Nancy Byrd, Ms. Maurine Daughan, and Dr. Brenda Wright. Ms. Byrd was Leon County Director of Title I . Ms. Daughan was Gadsden County Director of Elementary Schools. Dr. Wright was Florida A&M University College of Education Director of Student Teaching.

Dr. Ignatz served as mentor to Ms. Daughan at Stewart St. Elementary. Dr. Bauman, mentored Dr. Wright at Havana Elementary; and Dr. Dawson, Ms. Byrd at Pineview Elementary. Two site facilitators—Ms. Wendy Barber from Bond Elementary and Ms. Debbie Batts from St. John Elementary were also trained at Stanford to serve as liaisons between the coaches and their respective schools.

Circumstances beyond the control of the staff called for changes in the coaching assignments. During the Fall of 1995 Dr. Wright's responsibilities at the FAMU Student Teaching Office became overwhelming so she relinquished her coaching commitment. Coaching of Havana Elementary became Dr. Bauman's primary project responsibility. In the following summer, Ms. Sharon Thomas, Gadsden County educational specialist, began the coaches' training at the South Carolina Satellite Center. She coached Havana Elementary under the mentorship of Dr. Bauman during the 1996-97 school year and then completed her training during the summer of 1997 at the University of New Orleans Satellite Center.

The project staff was not without challenges throughout the implementation period. Dr. Joel Dawson was reassigned to serve as principal of Sabal Palm Elementary School in the spring of 1996 and could not continue to coach Bond Elementary School or mentor Mrs. Byrd at Pineview. Dr. Ignatz, and on occasion Dr. Bauman, assisted Ms. Byrd at Pineview Elementary School. Dr. Ignatz and Dr. Bauman continued to coach Bond Elementary School. Dr. Ignatz coached St. John Elementary School and mentored Ms. Daughan at Stewart St. Elementary.

Principal turnover posed the biggest challenge to the project staff because the principal is the key person in the continuity of the transformation of a school. Bond Principal, Mrs. James, was again hospitalized in 1996. Nonetheless the interim principal, Mr. Chavis, continued to support the Accelerated Schools Project until the return of Mrs. James in 1997. Mrs. James was very influential in the progress of Bond. Through her leadership, teachers were empowered and students' scores improved at a commendable rate compared to similar

schools. The Pineview Principal, Mrs. Joan Dupont, resigned in the spring of 1997. Pineview ceased to be an Accelerated School the following year. Mrs. Turner, principal of St. John Elementary was transferred to Havana Elementary in the Fall of 1998 and Mr. William Caldwell was appointed principal of St. John Elementary. Mrs. James retired at the end of the school year 1998-99 and Mrs. Arrhea Williams became Bond principal in 1999.

As the schools became more mature Accelerated Schools, site facilitators for the newer schools were selected to assist the coaches. Ms. Hilda Jackson and Dr. Verna Norris served as site facilitator at Havana Elementary and Stewart St. Elementary, respectively. The role of the site facilitators in increasing the capacity of the schools was significant. When Dr. Bauman went on maternity leave and Mrs. Daughan's district responsibilities would not allow her to continue coaching on a weekly basis, Dr. Ignatz and Ms. Byrd were able to continue supporting the transformation of the schools because of the internal assistance they were receiving.

Networking with Other Florida Local Centers

The Florida A&M University Center established and maintained contact with the coaches in Duval County and in Dade County from 1993 through 97. In the fall of 1995 the coaches met in Tallahassee with Hank Levin and visited some of the schools. Later, one of the Duval coaches retired and the Duval initiative was taken over by the University of North Florida and expanded to include two additional schools. Dr. Joyce Jones, the new coordinator attended an Accelerated Schools retreat in Tallahassee and continued to network with the Center on a limited basis. The Duval Accelerated Schools Project terminated in 1999.

The two schools in Dade County worked against overwhelming odds when Hurricane Andrew demolished the buildings of one school and tore up some of the buildings of the other school during the first year of the project. Eventually the responsibilities of the coaches to the district encumbered their ability to coach the schools effectively and to sustain the process so the project was dropped after two years.

Accelerated Schools Technical Assistance Site

The FAMU Accelerated Schools Center was upgraded to a Technical Assistance Site in 1998 with Dr. Mila Ignatz serving as Director and Dr. Gail Bauman as Associate Director. Ms. Byrd became Associate Director in 1999 when Dr. Bauman took maternity leave. Due to the intensity of the support that coaches have to provide to schools the National Policy Advisory Board limited expansion to interested schools that were within an hour driving distance from Tallahassee.

During the next 2 years staffs from three school districts and staff from four schools participated in awareness sessions. However, no school followed through with applications to join the movement.

ACCELERATED SCHOOLS CHARACTERISTICS

The four schools included in this report are schools that have been with the project for at least five years. Bond Elementary is in the Leon School District. Havana Elementary School, St. John Elementary School, and Stewart St. Elementary School are located in Gadsden County.

Bond Elementary School is one of ten southside K-12 schools in the capital city of Tallahassee, Florida. It is an inner city school that is within a mile of the Florida A&M University campus. The majority of the students come from low income or lower middle income families.

There are 23 elementary schools in Leon County. The students in the schools come from families whose socioeconomic income levels vary. All schools were neighborhood schools prior to the school year 2000-2001 when parents were allowed to enroll their children in schools outside of their neighborhoods provided there were openings in the school where they wished to register their child.

Havana Elementary, St. John Elementary and Stewart St. Elementary Schools are rural schools located in the Gadsden School District. Gadsden County is about 20 miles east of Tallahassee, Florida. There are seven elementary schools in Gadsden county. St. John Elementary is one of the more remote schools in the district. The socioeconomic levels of the families of the students in the elementary schools in Gadsden county are approximately equivalent. The median household income in Gadsden County is approximately $20,000. According to the 1990 US Census, Gadsden has the highest proportion of individuals below the federal income poverty level in Florida (28% versus 12.7%). The rate of illiteracy in Gadsden is higher than the state average

.

The 1997 demographic information on the schools is shown in the following pages.

Leon School District

Bond Elementary School

Total Number of Students	432	
White	1	.20%
Black	431	99.8%
Hispanic	0	0
Native American	0	0
Asian	0	0
Students on Free or Reduced lunch	414	96.1%
Teachers by Years of Experience		
0-3 years		35.5%
4-9 years		22.6%
10+ years		41.9%

Gadsden School District

Havana Elementary School (Gadsden School District)

Total Number of Students	1042	
White	57	5.5%
Black	974	93.5%
Hispanic	10	1.0%
Native American	0	
Asian	0	
Students on Free or Reduced lunch	649	62.3%
Teachers by Years of Experience		
0-4 years		28%
5-10 years		14%
10+ years		58%

St. John Elementary School

Total Number of Students	437	
White	12	2.7%
Black	405	92.7%
Hispanic	20	4.6%
Native American	0	
Asian	0	
Students on Free or Reduced Lunch	350	80%
Teachers by Years of Experience		
0-4 years		23.1%
5-10 years		7.7%
10+ years		69.2%

Stewart St. Elementary School

Total Number of Students	789	
White	27	3.4%
Black	738	93.5%
Hispanic	24	3.0%
Native American	0	
Asian	0	
Students on Free or Reduced lunch	663	84%
Teachers by Years of Experience		
0-4 years		35.9%
5-10 years		28.2%
10+ years		35.9%

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Accelerated Schools Process

The Accelerated Schools Project was launched during preplanning of the first year followed by **Taking Stock.** Then the schools forged their **Vision** culminating with a vision celebration. **Setting Priorities, Establishing Governance Structures** and training in the **Inquiry Process** took place during the first year of the process.

The number of cadres depended upon the size of the school staff. Smaller schools had four cadres and the larger schools had 5 to 6 cadres.

The names of the cadres corresponded to the challenge areas. Initially the schools had cadres for curriculum, discipline, family/community involvement, achievement, and school climate. After the state started administering the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) in 1998 and the test results were used to evaluate schools and to monitor student promotion and retention, the cadres became more specialized so that cadres were formed to address mathematics, writing and reading achievement in addition to parent/community involvement, school safety, discipline etc.

The cadres met at least twice a month, while the steering committee and School-As-A-Whole met monthly. The steering committee monitored the progress of the cadres and served as a clearinghouse for cadre information. Decisions for schoolwide implementation were discussed and made during School-As-A-Whole meetings.

At the beginning of each succeeding year, during preplanning, the schools conducted a **Setting Priorities** activity to identify the priorities for the school year and defined the cadres that would address the challenges. Staff also self selected which cadres they would be representing.

At the end of each school year, the accelerated schools reflected on their successes and challenges and made recommendations for the cadres for the following year.

Coaches visited the schools at least once a week during the first three in the process. Visits were reduced to three times a month after the third year in the process. During the visits coaches observed and participated in discussions during cadre, steering or School-As-A-Whole meetings; visited classrooms; and mentored teacher teams on powerful learning planning days or on grade level team meeting days.

Powerful Learning

The FAMU Technical Assistance Site provided grant funds to enable teachers to meet in grade level teams with special area teachers twice a year to develop integrated curriculum units that addressed the Sunshine State Standards. The process used consisted of the following steps:

1. Identifying the 'essential questions' or understandings that the students were expected to comprehend at the end of the unit.
2. Identifying the Sunshine State Benchmarks that were addressed in the unit.
3. Deciding which instructional strategies would be utilized to introduce the concepts of the unit, using higher order thinking skills and various measures used to determine the gains in understanding made by students.
4. Designing an instructional activities outline that integrated the subject areas.
5. Choosing performance tasks that would demonstrate the students' understanding and knowledge at the end of the unit, such as a science fair or a share fair of student products and projects.
6. Brainstorming and deciding upon criteria and scoring rubrics to assess student performance.
7. Choosing the resources to be used in the unit.

The integrated curriculums increased the language experiences of low income students and helped students connect what they were learning in the classroom with real life situations. Teachers incorporated activities that fostered participation and collaboration among learners through cooperative learning. The units allowed for exploration and discovery. The teachers were trained and encouraged to use alternative assessment strategies to promote the development of higher order thinking skills through projects, presentations, group discussions, debates, and science investigations.

Over the course of the years the schools developed a number of powerful learning units. Schools shared ideas and units. Some units were refined the following year. Others were adapted from other teachers' unit plans.

Teachers also met in grade level teams at least twice monthly to address student and classroom needs, to analyze test scores and student progress, and to plan instructional strategies to address challenges.

VISION STATEMENTS

Bond Elementary School

The Bond School Community will provide a safe, caring, learning center with an enriched curriculum that will foster academic achievement, positive attitudes, responsibility, and respect in order to promote success in a diverse cultural and global environment.

Havana Elementary School

We want our students to perform at their fullest potential, emotionally, morally, academically, socially, and physically in pursuing their goals with high expectations.

The high expectations of students, staff, parents, and community working cooperatively will ensure a friendly, respectful and peaceful environment that promotes learning through self-discipline and successful resolution of conflict.

The students will be actively involved in curricular, as well as extra-curricular experiences, where there are opportunities for developing higher order thinking skills.

Our school will be a safe, drug-free, clean, attractive, modern facility with current technology, equipment, and an adequate number of personnel and resources.

St. John Elementary School

St. John Accelerated School staff, students, parents and community will collaboratively create an environment in which:

- students will develop a sense of worth through challenging, meaningful and relevant academic and social experiences.

- students will become critical and creative thinkers and lifelong learners who have a sense of control over their lives and who are prepared to meet the challenges of the future.

- students will increase their knowledge, communication skills, and analytical skills through an enriched curriculum that connects the classroom with real life experiences.

- students will acquire interpersonal skills that will enable them to interact productively with children and adults of varied economic and/or cultural backgrounds through instructional programs that promote multicultural appreciation, cooperative learning, and effective strategies for resolving conflicts.

- students will acquire a strong morals and values foundation which will lead to respect for their physical well-being, for themselves, and others.

- students will be provided opportunities to develop their talents through musical, artistic, athletic, technological, social and intellectual activities.

Stewart St. Elementary School

Stewart St. Elementary School is a partnership of the students, staff, parents, and community

- to empower students, parents, teachers, staff, and the community to share in the learning environment,
- to create a safe, secure and non-threatening environment where freedom to learn is important,
- to broaden students' knowledge base and their understanding of the world around them through participation in a challenging curriculum that integrates different areas of learning,
- to help students develop interpersonal skills that will enable them to interact with children and adults of varied economic and/cultural backgrounds,
- to provide opportunities for students to actively engage in making decisions and accept responsibility for those decisions, and
- to design and maintain an environment which fosters positive self-esteem and develops personal responsibility.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this report is to document the ongoing processes and impacts of the program. It examines the successes and barriers to success for implementation of the FAMU Accelerated Schools initiative. The evaluation focused on the process of implementing the three principles of Accelerated Schools and also examined available student outcome data.

The evaluation report is organized around the following questions:

1. How well have the schools in the Accelerated Schools Network implemented the concepts and principles of the Accelerated Schools Process?

2. To what extent has the Accelerated Schools process influenced the organization, curriculum and instructional practices in the Accelerated Schools?

3. How has implementation of the Accelerated Schools process changed the roles of involved parties: principals, teachers, staff, parents, students, and community groups?

4. Of what value is this effort for improvement of school management at the Accelerated Schools?

5. To what extent has student performance improved in the Accelerated Schools?

6. What benefits and barriers exist (local, district, school) that hinder and help implementation of the Accelerated Schools process?

The following data collection strategies were employed for the evaluation:

1. Observations of project implementation at the Accelerated Schools and review of records of minutes of cadre, steering/SAC (School Advisory Council), and SAW (school-As-A-whole) meetings.

2. Review of coaches' reports and log.

3. Review of records and documents created by or maintained by the project and schools including Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT), Florida Writes, and norm referenced test results.

4. Administration of an Accelerated Schools Progress Questionnaire.

5. Analysis of CSRD (Comprehensive School Reform Development) Successful Schools Survey for Instructional Personnel.

6. Interviews with school administrators and staff.

The Accelerated Schools Progress Questionnaire was administered to the four Accelerated Schools in the Spring of 2000. The Accelerated Schools Progress Questionnaire is a modified form of the questionnaire in the Accelerated Schools Evaluation Toolkit. The schools were completing their fifth and seventh year in the process so that some of the items in the Toolkit Questionnaire were not applicable. The items on **Taking Stock** were replaced by items on **Setting Priorities** because **Taking Stock** was carried out during the first year in the process. Challenges and priorities sometimes changed from one year to the next so schools performed **Setting Priorities** at the beginning of *each* school year. Additionally, one of the **Vision** items was modified to address School Improvement which was a statewide initiative.

The resulting Accelerated Schools Project Questionnaire (Scantron Portion) had the following ten components:

1. Philosophy
2. Unity of Purpose
3. Empowerment Coupled With Responsibility
4. Building On Strengths
5. Values
6. Vision
7. Setting Priorities
8. Powerful Learning
9. Inquiry
10. Governance

The Florida Department of Education administered the Successful Schools Survey for Instructional Personnel to CSRD (Comprehensive School Reform Development) grant recipients throughout the state during the 1999-2000 school year. The four Accelerated Schools were CSRD recipients. Therefore the Successful Schools Survey data analysis from the Florida Department of Education was also utilized in evaluating the program.

Items in the Successful Schools Survey were clustered into the following categories:

A. School Mission
B. Frequent Monitoring
C. Safe and Orderly Environment
D. High Expectations
E. Opportunity to Learn
F. Instructional Leadership
G. Home-School Relations

Data acquired through the Accelerated Schools Progress Questionnaire and the Florida CSRD Successful Schools Survey for Instructional Personnel were used to respond to the first three evaluation questions.

Results of FCAT and norm referenced tests were secured from school records or from the District Evaluation Department. The data was analyzed to determine the extent to which student performance improved in the Accelerated Schools (Evaluation Question No.5).

School portfolios and interviews with teachers and school administrators were sources for the information related to the impact of the Accelerated Schools Process on the day-to-day operations and on student outcomes (Evaluation Questions 4 and 6).

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The first three evaluation questions were addressed using the results of the Accelerated Schools Questionnaire (Scantron Portion) and the CSRD Successful Schools Staff Survey.

The values assigned to the choices are shown below and Table 1 shows the average responses by section by school.

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = No Opinion
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

In the interpretation of the data, the ASP Technical Assistance Site's steering committee, consisting of the coaches and the site facilitators, identified components with ratings of 4.0 and above as indicators of areas of strength. Component ratings between 3.5 and 4.0 indicated areas of increased capacity while items with ratings below 3.5 as indicators of challenge areas that needed to be addressed.

1. How well have the schools in the Accelerated Schools Network implemented the concepts and principles of the Accelerated Schools Process?

The item means of the identified sections from the respective surveys were used to determine the extent to which the schools have implemented the concepts and principles of Accelerated Schools:

A. Accelerated Schools Project Questionnaire

1. Accelerated Schools Philosophy
2. Unity of Purpose
3. Empowerment Coupled With Responsibility
4. Building on Strengths
5. Values
6. Vision

B. CSRD Successful Schools Survey for Instructional Personnel

1. School Mission

Table 1. Average Responses to Items Related to the Concepts and Principles of the Accelerated Schools Ideal

A. Accelerated Schools Project Questionnaire

	Bond	Havana	St. John	Stewart St.	Mean
1. Accelerated Schools Philosophy	4.1	3.6	4.4	3.4	3.9
2. Unity of Purpose	4.1	3.7	4.2	3.3	3.8
3. Empowerment Coupled With Responsibility	3.9	3.5	4.4	3.5	3.8
4. Building on Strengths	3.9	3.6	4.4	3.5	3.9
5. Values	4.1	3.8	4.3	3.5	3.9
6. Vision	4.5	4.2	4.6	4.1	4.4
Mean	**4.1**	**3.7**	**4.4**	**3.6**	**3.9**

B. CSRD Successful Schools Survey for Instructional Personnel

	Bond	Havana	St. John	Stewart St.	Mean
1. School Mission	4.5	4.1	4.0	3.9	4.1

The range of the school means for the Accelerated Schools Project Questionnaire on the components that address the Concepts and Principles of Accelerated Schools was 3.6 to 4.1. The mean for all four schools on all of the specific components was 3.9. The school vision received the highest rating with a range of 4.1 to 4.6. This was validated by the items addressing School Mission in the CSRD Successful Schools Survey. The more mature schools (Bond and St. John) gave higher ratings to the vision items confirming the coaches' observations that they were more in tune with their school vision and cognizant of its power in unifying the school's stakeholders.

Bond and St. John also gave higher ratings to the other five components (Accelerated Schools philosophy, the three ASP principles and ASP values). They have been in the process longer and it is evident that they have integrated to a greater extent the ASP philosophy, principles and values into the day-to-day school operations. Stewart St. and Havana, on the other hand, demonstrated increased capacity in the Accelerated Schools process.

2. ***To what extent has the Accelerated Schools process influenced the organization, curriculum and instructional practices in the Accelerated Schools?***

The item means of the following sections from the respective surveys were used to determine the extent to which the process influenced the organization, curriculum and instructional practices in the Accelerated Schools:

A. Accelerated Schools Project Questionnaire

1. Philosophy
2. Setting Priorities
3. Governance
4. Powerful Learning
5. Inquiry

B. CSRD Successful Schools Survey for Instructional Personnel

1. Frequent Monitoring
2. Safe and Orderly Environment
3. High Expectations
4. Opportunity to Learn
5. Instructional Leadership

Table 2. Average Responses to Items Related to Organization, Curriculum, and Instructional Practices in the Accelerated Schools

A. Accelerated Schools Project Questionnaire

	Bond	Havana	St. John	Stewart St.	Mean
1. Philosophy	4.1	3.6	4.4	3.4	3.9
2. Setting Priorities	4.7	4.2	4.5	4.1	4.4
3. Governance	4.2	4.1	4.6	3.8	4.2
4. Powerful Learning	4.3	4.2	4.5	3.9	4.2
5. Inquiry	4.2	4.0	4.6	3.8	4.2
Mean	**4.3**	**4.0**	**4.5**	**3.8**	**4.2**

B. CSRD Successful Schools Survey for Instructional Personnel

	Bond	Havana	St. John	Stewart St.	Mean
1. Frequent Monitoring	4.2	4.1	3.8	3.7	4.0
2. Safe and Orderly Environment	3.9	3.3	3.7	3.4	3.6
3. High Expectations	4.2	3.9	3.7	3.5	3.8
4. Opportunity to Learn	4.2	4.1	3.7	3.5	3.9
5. Instructional Leadership	4.1	4.4	3.8	3.8	4.0
Mean	**4.1**	**4.0**	**3.7**	**3.6**	**3.9**

The Accelerated Schools Project addresses school organization, curriculum and instructional practices more comprehensively through the ASP Philosophy, **Setting Priorities**, the **Governance** structure, the **Inquiry Process** and **Powerful Learning** than the more specific items in the CSRD Successful Schools Survey. For instance, **Setting Priorities** and the **Inquiry Process** address the major school priorities that include Safe and Orderly Environment and Frequent School Monitoring. Though High Expectations and Opportunity to Learn are good indicators of instructional practices there are other practices that make learning powerful such as the use of alternative assessment, cooperative learning, making connections with real life, and curriculum integration.

The school means for ASP items related to organization, curriculum, and instructional practices ranged from 3.8 to 4.5 while the means for the CSRD survey ranged from 3.6 to 4.1. The means for the composite items in the ASP questionnaire were higher than the CSRD survey. None of the composite means were below 3.5.

Both survey instruments indicated that the staffs at Bond, Havana, and St. John perceived themselves as having acquired capacity to address issues related to organization, curriculum and instructional practices. Stewart St. and St. John staffs perceived themselves as growing in their capacity to address specific issues included in the Successful Schools Survey.

High Expectations and Safe and Orderly Environment were specific components that the majority of the schools need to continue addressing.

Meeting minutes for the cadres, steering committees and School-As-A-Whole provided evidence that the Accelerated Schools utilized the governance structure and the inquiry process to address their challenges and to monitor their progress throughout the year.

Evidences in support of staff development related to powerful learning, high expectations and opportunity to learn included integrated curriculum units designed by teacher teams, grade level team meetings to promote powerful learning in classrooms and coaches' logs of meetings with grade level teams. Additional evidence is the increasing scores of students in the norm referenced tests, FCAT and Florida Writes.

3. ***How has implementation of the Accelerated Schools process changed the roles of involved parties: principals, teachers, staff, parents, students, and community groups?***

The item means of the identified sections from the respective surveys were used to determine the extent to which the process changed the roles of the various school stakeholders:

A. Accelerated Schools Project Questionnaire

1. Unity of Purpose
2. Empowerment Coupled with Responsibility
3. Building on Strengths
4. Governance

B. CSRD Successful Schools Survey for Instructional Personnel

1. Instructional Leadership
2. Home & School Relations

Table 3. Average Responses of Items That Address the Changed Roles of Stakeholders in the Accelerated Schools

A. Accelerated Schools Project Questionnaire

	Bond	Havana	St. John	Stewart St.	Mean
1. Unity of Purpose	4.1	3.7	4.2	3.3	3.8
2. Empowerment Coupled with Responsibility	3.9	3.5	4.4	3.5	3.8
3. Building on Strengths	3.9	3.6	4.4	3.5	3.9
4. Governance	4.2	4.1	4.6	3.8	4.2
Mean	**4.0**	**3.7**	**4.4**	**3.5**	**3.9**

B. CSRD Successful Schools Survey for Instructional Personnel

	Bond	Havana	St. John	Stewart St.	Mean
1. Instructional Leadership	4.1	4.4	3.8	3.8	4.0
2. Home & School Relations	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.1	3.6
Mean	**3.9**	**4.1**	**3.8**	**3.5**	**3.8**

The effective systemic transformation of a school requires the involvement of all stakeholders. It necessitates the participation of the entire school community within the governance structure (teachers, students, administrators, noninstructional staff, parents, district staff, business partners and members of the community) in the pursuit of the school vision by means of the ASP principles. Everyone participates in decision making and in the implementation of the decisions.

The composite school means that addressed the changed roles of stakeholders in the Accelerated Schools Project Questionnaire were at least 4.0 for the more mature Accelerated Schools (Bond and St. John). The fifth year school means indicated that they were at the stage of gaining capacity with respect to the three ASP principles and Governance. Unity of Purpose for Stewart St. was identified as a challenge area.

The two CSRD Successful Schools Survey components addressing changed roles of stakeholders were Instructional Leadership and Home & School Relations. These items were more specific and limited to the school leadership and school/home relationships. Bond and Havana data indicated strong instructional leadership while St. John and Stewart St. indicated gaining capacity. Home and School Relations is a priority area that all schools, especially Stewart St, need to continue to work on.

The cadre, SAC/Steering and SAW meeting minutes provided evidence that staff and parents were becoming more empowered to participate in the decision-making processes at the school. They were also empowered to carry out the decisions made during cadre and SAW meetings. However, the participation by parents and the community was not as extensive as the staff expected to achieve.

The principals, assistant principals, and the curriculum coordinators perceived themselves better able to serve as instructional leaders and found themselves running the school more efficiently rather than spending most of their time on discipline matters and responding to paperwork.

4. Of what value is this effort for improvement of school management at the Accelerated Schools?

The information in this section was gathered from the input of administrators, coaches, teachers, non-instructional staff, parents, district staff, and from school portfolios.

The school culture of the Accelerated Schools was transformed and though evidences were non-quantifiable, district level personnel and educators evaluating the schools commented that the schools have emerged as uniquely different from other schools. Administrators, teachers and staff demonstrated ownership of their schools. The governance structure and the inquiry process empowered staff, teachers and parents to make decisions and through consensus implement their decisions. As one teacher put it, *"Accelerated Schools got us organized and functioning because of clearer expectations."*

The Accelerated Schools governance structure made everyone take ownership of the school and feel that their involvement and input was meaningful. Risk taking became more evident. Staff members were willing to take on new challenges and there was greater participation in school improvement by district staff.

The school staffs felt that the group decision-making process generated more and richer ideas in cadre, steering and SAW meetings because they were able to build on each others' ideas. The collaboration in cadres and grade level teams enabled them to accomplish objectives in considerably less time.

Open communication and trust in the school community increased. Stakeholders felt free to give input or provide feedback on issues impacting the school. Teachers and staff were in touch with events and on-going activities throughout the school through the different communication avenues. There was a sense of school spirit. Empowered staff enabled school activities and initiatives to proceed smoothly and efficiently. School administrators were able to spend more time as instructional leaders rather than as school managers.

Flexible scheduling and additional planning days during the school year and summer allowed teacher teams to plan together and to share ideas, resources and instructional materials. They were supporting each other's efforts, exchanging points of view and planning collaboratively to improve student achievement and discipline. Teachers gained expertise in addressing the needs of the students in writing, reading and mathematics and met in grade level teams to develop powerful learning units. Over 40 integrated curriculum units were developed which were modified and improved from one year to the next. Educational Share Fairs were held for students to exhibit their creative and integrated projects and to demonstrate their talents before parents and members of the community.

Stakeholders were more involved not only in the day-to-day operations of the school but were also unified in achieving short-term objectives and long-term goals. Through the Inquiry Process, cadres met regularly to address the challenges and needs of the school. Cadres planned and organized staff development which was provided by either the coaches, outside consultants or by teachers in the school with special expertise. The reading cadres launched, facilitated and monitored the Accelerated Reader Program. A grant was funded to set up Read, Write and Type! Computing Labs. Reading cadres revitalized the media center into a learning center. They launched fund raising projects to purchase new books for the media center. Math cadres sponsored Math Problem Solving contests weekly. Writing cadres facilitated teacher validation of the scoring of student writing products according to the writing rubrics. The curriculum cadres worked to secure classroom resources, materials and supplies.

Parent/community cadres sponsored Computer Literacy, Family Reading Nights, Family Math, Family Science, and Peace Works workshops for parents. Parent resource rooms were set up enabling parents to check out materials with which to help their children. Parent involvement increased through school volunteerism. Communication between parents and teachers improved because of ASP information vehicles. Parents landscaped school

grounds using donated shrubs and plants, designed and constructed school playgrounds and secured blinds for installation throughout the school.

A more positive school climate for staff and students was noted by a principal. Positive school discipline plans and safety procedures were developed and their implementation monitored by cadres. Discipline improved. Accomplishments and achievements by teachers, staff and students were recognized in assemblies and on school bulletin boards and thus provided additional opportunities for development of leadership. The climate cadres facilitated the construction of parking facilities and ramps for the handicapped and covered walkways; the installation of closed circuit TV and wall-to-wall carpeting in classrooms; the purchase of furniture for the classroom and teachers' lounge; the painting of facilities; and the design and implementation of flow of traffic in the school driveway.

> *"My role as principal became more personal and the entire school community shared the responsibility of running the school."*
>
> Mr. William Caldwell
> Principal, St. John
> Accelerated School

The state-mandated School Improvement Plan and its implementation were made smoother and more thorough through the constant and commendable efforts of cadres in monitoring and assessing progress made toward school objectives. Collaboration among teachers and records of collaboration between the school and the community were evidenced in minutes of cadre, steering/School Advisory Council, and School-As-A-Whole meetings enabling SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) accreditation to proceed efficiently and successfully.

5. To what extent has student performance improved in the Accelerated Schools?

Data were analyzed and interpreted for the following sets of scores in the following order:

A. Fifth Grade Achievement test scores (CAT-5, CTBS, TerraNova)
B. Florida Writes scores (fourth grade)
C. FCAT Reading and Mathematics scores (fourth grade and fifth grade, respectively)

Fifth grade test scores on the norm-referenced achievement tests, the Florida Writes! and FCAT Reading and Mathematics tests provided objective data to gauge progress in student performance. They provided data on the extent to which students improved and have entered the educational mainstream.

Regression lines provided a means to compare the rate of progress of the Accelerated Schools against the schools in the district or schools with similar student populations. A school with a percentile rank at or above the 50th percentile in a standardized test was also indicative that it was in the educational mainstream.

Norm-referenced tests were administered by the respective districts to the Accelerated Schools every year. Test scores were provided by the districts starting from the year prior to joining the Accelerated Schools movement through 1999-2000. The norm-referenced test scores provided longitudinal data to determine student progress.

Bond used the CAT-5 (California Achievement Test) through 1998 then changed to the TerraNova. The Gadsden District Schools implemented the CTBS (California Test of Basic Skills) and likewise changed to TerraNova in 1998. Equating tables from TerraNova to CAT-5 and CTBS were used to convert the national percentiles so that the data were consistent and comparisons could be made. The Gadsden District chose not to administer the TerraNova when the state started administering Stanford 9 in the spring '00. Since equating tables were not available to convert Stanford 9 scaled scores to the TerraNova or CTBS, the Gadsden schools achievement graphs extended only through 1999.

For comparison purposes it was necessary to use an equal interval scale which the percentile data was not. Consequently, the mean national percentiles were converted to normal curve equivalents (NCE).

Simple regression lines showing trends of normal curve equivalents (NCE) and Florida Writes during the years in the project were obtained. The coefficient of x (slope of the line) was used as an indicator of the rate of student progress. This allowed for the comparison of the rate of growth of students in the Accelerated Schools and that of the student population of the respective district or comparison school. The line intercept provided additional information in terms of baseline data for the schools.

The regression lines for the Accelerated Schools were compared with the regression lines for the total elementary schools in their respective districts. Comparison with district data enabled us to distinguish between changes in test scores due to acceleration and contextual factors. Contextual factors refer to local idiosyncratic events which may have influenced student outcomes such as a change in norm referenced test or changes in the FCAT tests to increase the difficulty level.

Additionally, the regression lines for Bond were compared with those of Leonard Wesson Elementary, a neighboring school that had a similar student population. Including Wesson in the comparison provided a better assessment of student progress at Bond because Leon District's 23 elementary schools consisted of inner city, urban and suburban schools. No comparison schools were identified for the Gadsden accelerated schools because the students in the seven Gadsden elementary schools were from comparable socioeconomic income families although some were in more remote communities.

FCAT and Florida Writes data for Bond extended through the year 2000 while the other three schools extended through 2001. Bond opted out of the process at the beginning of the 2000-2001 school year because of staff relocations.

Graphs Showing Longitudinal Development of Student Achievement

The graphs are organized in the following order:

A. Fifth Grade Norm Referenced Achievement Tests Scores

1. Bond Elementary Compared With Wesson Elementary and all Leon Elementary Schools (Reading)
2. Bond Elementary Compared With Wesson Elementary and all Leon Elementary Schools (Mathematics)
3. Havana Elementary, St. John Elementary and Stewart St. Elementary Compared with all Gadsden Elementary Schools (Reading)
4. Havana Elementary, St. John Elementary and Stewart St. Elementary Compared with all Gadsden Elementary Schools (Mathematics)
5.

B. Fourth Grade Florida Writes Composite Scores

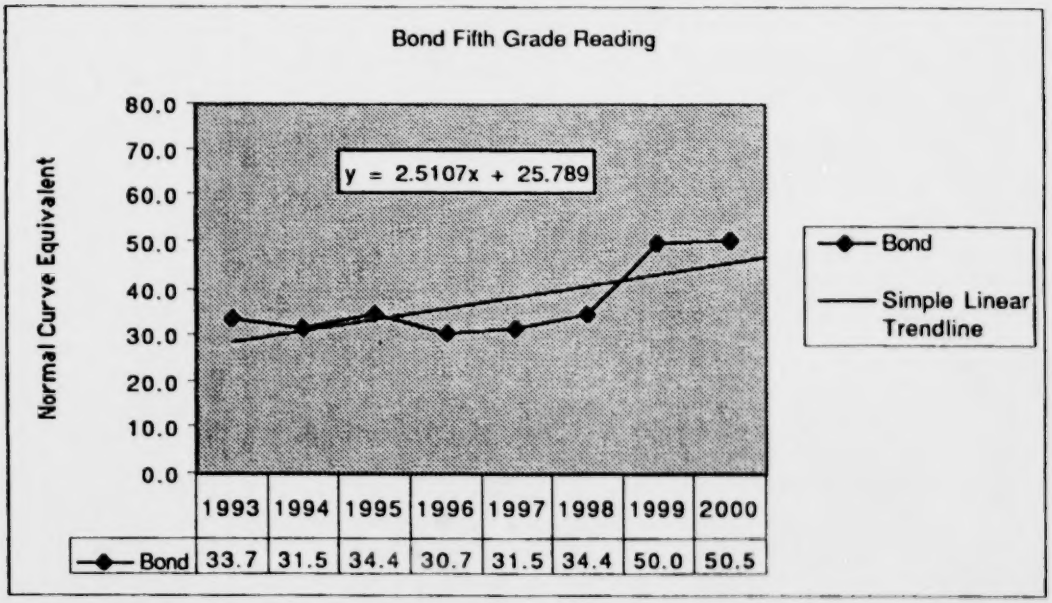
1. Bond Elementary Compared with Wesson Elementary and all Leon Elementary Schools
2. Havana Elementary, St. John Elementary and Stewart St. Elementary Compared with all Gadsden Elementary Schools

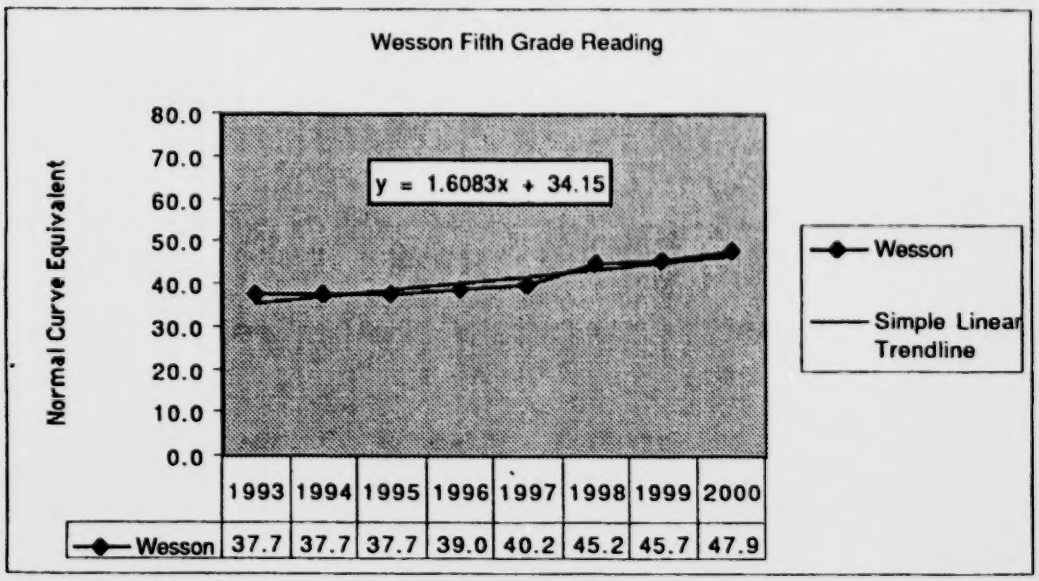
C. FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test) Scores in 4th grade Reading and 5th grade Mathematics

1. Bond Elementary Compared With Wesson Elementary and all Leon Elementary Schools (Reading)
2. Bond Elementary Compared With Wesson Elementary and all Leon Elementary Schools (Mathematics)
3. Havana Elementary, St. John Elementary and Stewart St. Elementary Compared with all Gadsden Elementary Schools (Reading)
4. Havana Elementary, St. John Elementary and Stewart St. Elementary Compared with all Gadsden Elementary Schools (Mathematics)

A1. Norm Referenced Achievement Test Scores in Reading (Leon District)

Bond Elementary, Wesson Elementary and Leon District





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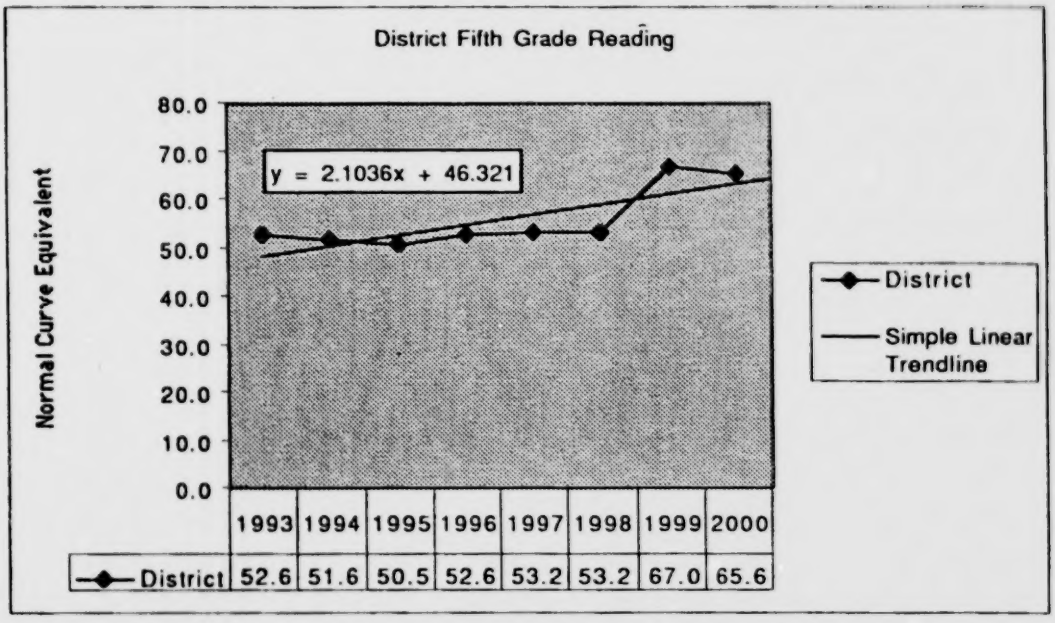

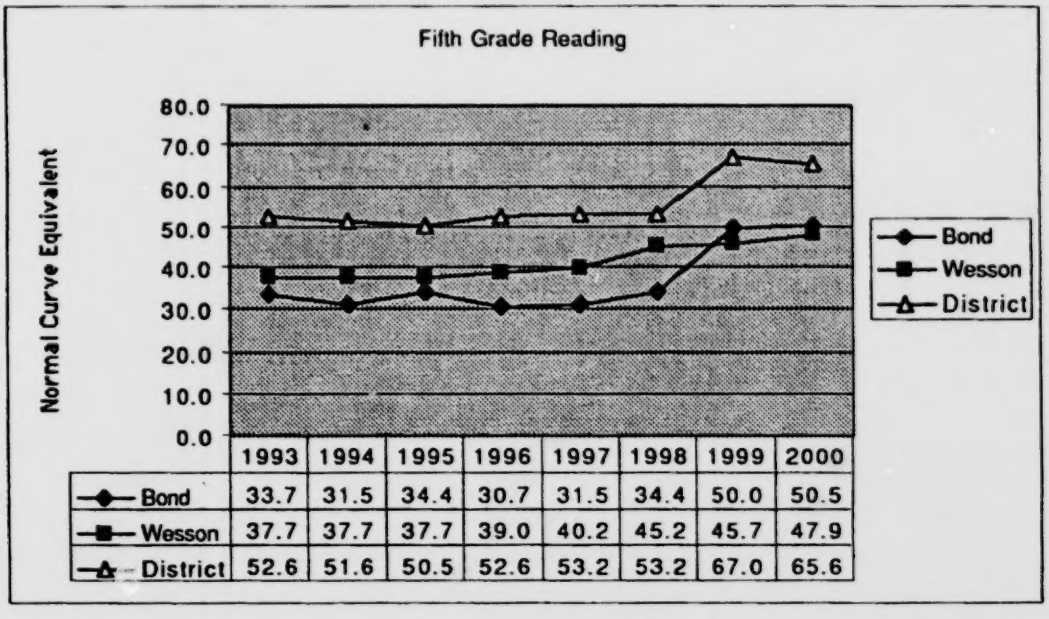

Interpretation: Bond reading scores in 1999 and 2000 were at and above the 50th NCE, respectively, indicating that the students were in the educational mainstream.

Bond's reading scores improved significantly in 1999 and 2000 producing a regression coefficient that was higher than that of the District or of Wesson giving evidence that the Bond scores were improving at a faster rate than the Wesson or District scores.

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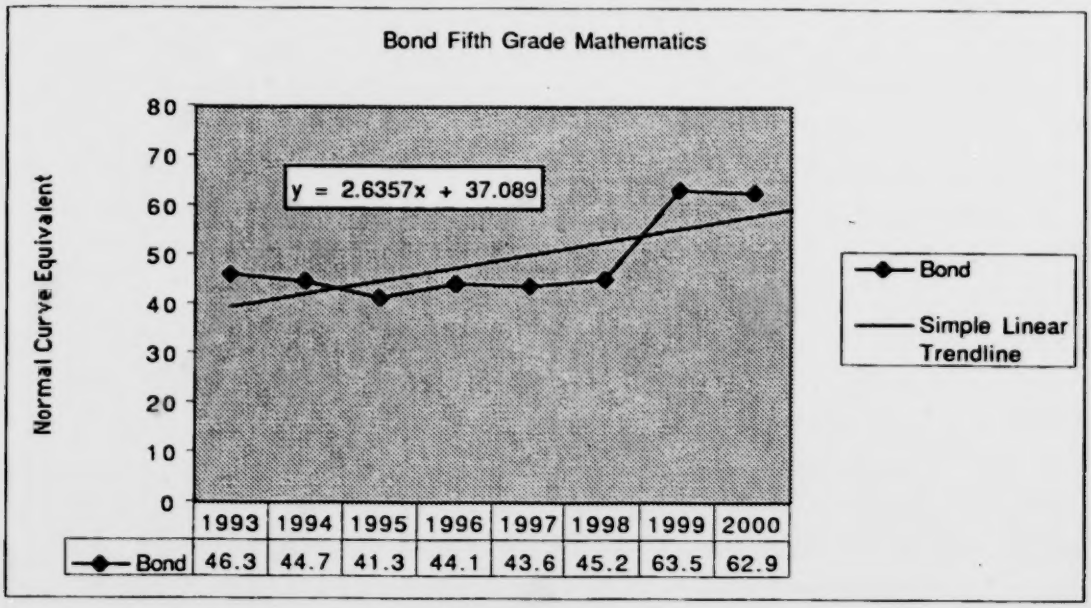
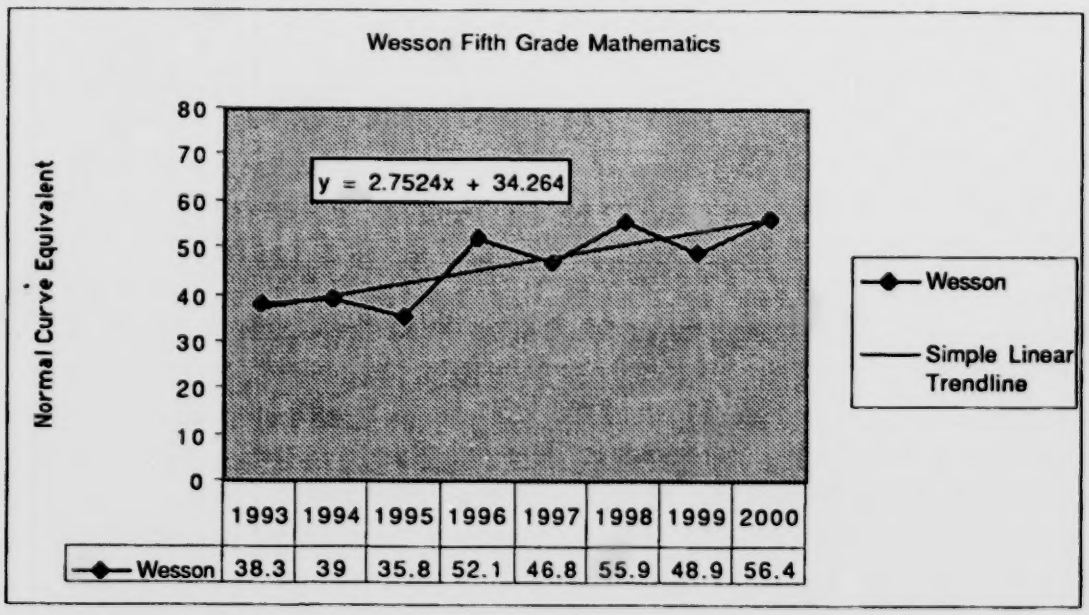
A2. Norm Referenced Achievement Test Scores in Mathematics (Leon District)

Bond, Wesson and Leon District Schools


Bond Fifth Grade Mathematics
Normal Curve Equivalent
y = 2.6357x + 37.089
Bond
Simple Linear Trendline
1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000
Bond 46.3 44.7 41.3 44.1 43.6 45.2 63.5 62.9


Wesson Fifth Grade Mathematics
Normal Curve Equivalent
y = 2.7524x + 34.264
Wesson
Simple Linear Trendline
1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000
Wesson 38.3 39 35.8 52.1 46.8 55.9 48.9 56.4

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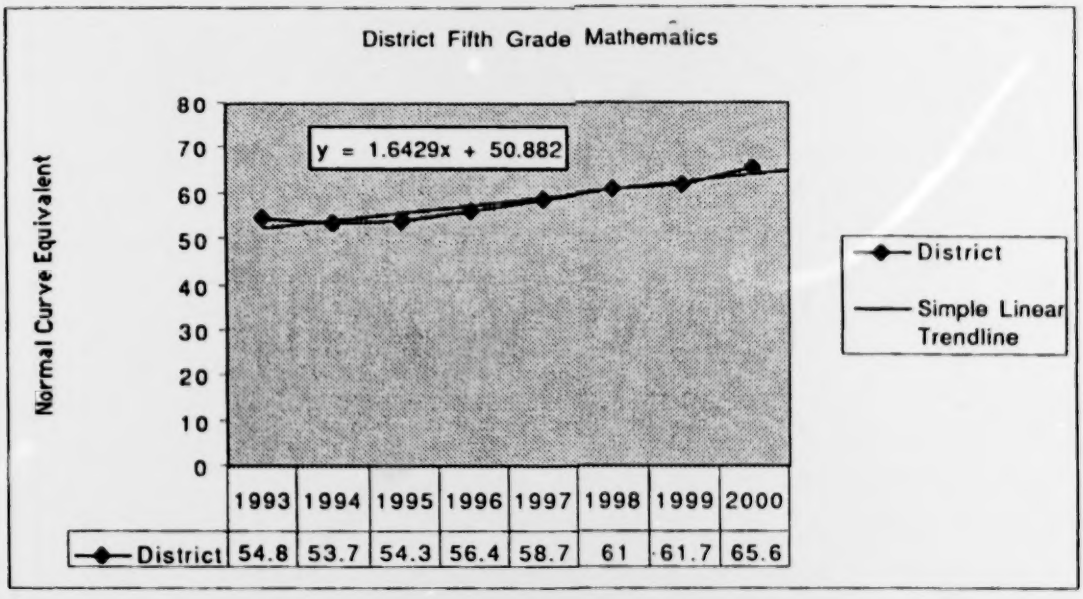
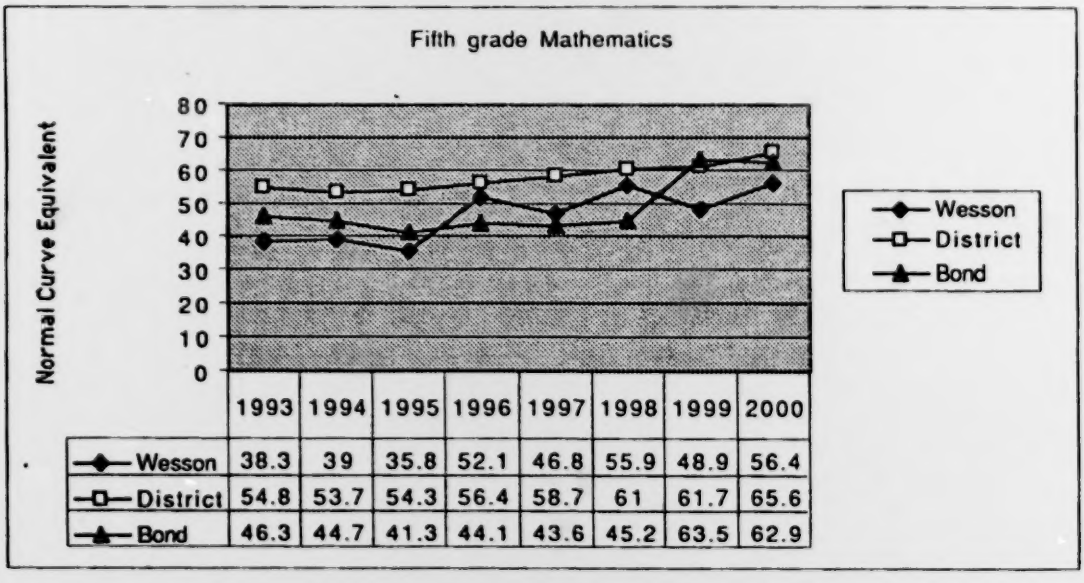

District Fifth Grade Mathematics
Normal Curve Equivalent
y = 1.6429x + 50.882
District
Simple Linear Trendline
1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000
District 54.8 53.7 54.3 56.4 58.7 61 61.7 65.6



Interpretation: Bond's math scores were significantly above the 50th NCE in 1999 & 2000 indicating that the students were in the educational mainstream. The regression coefficient of Bond was almost twice that of the District. Wesson's regression coefficient was slightly higher than Bond's because Bond started with higher scores within the evaluation period.

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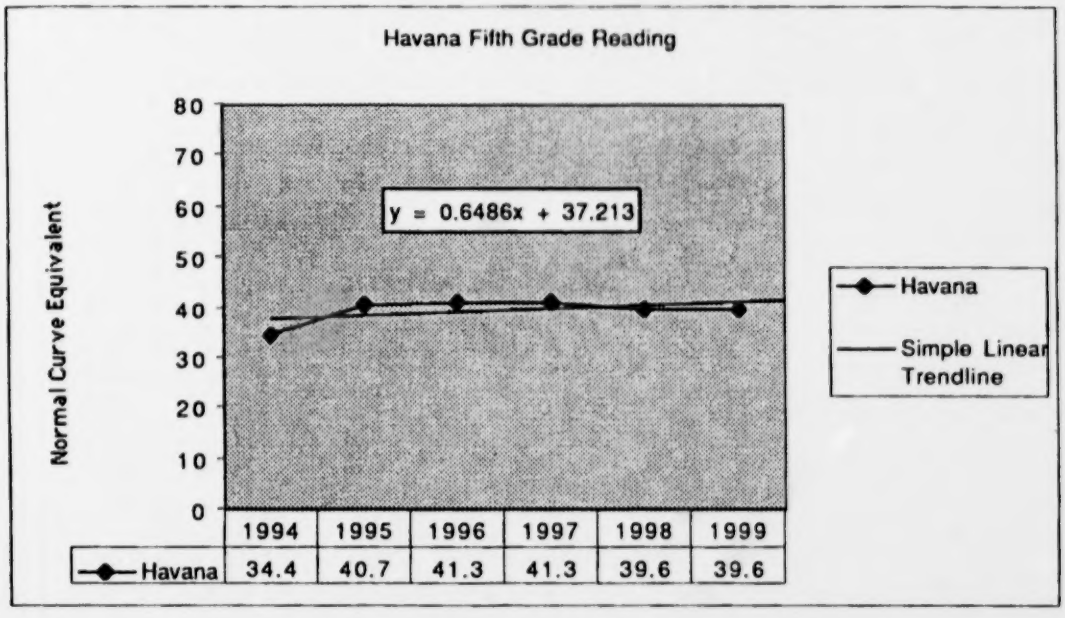
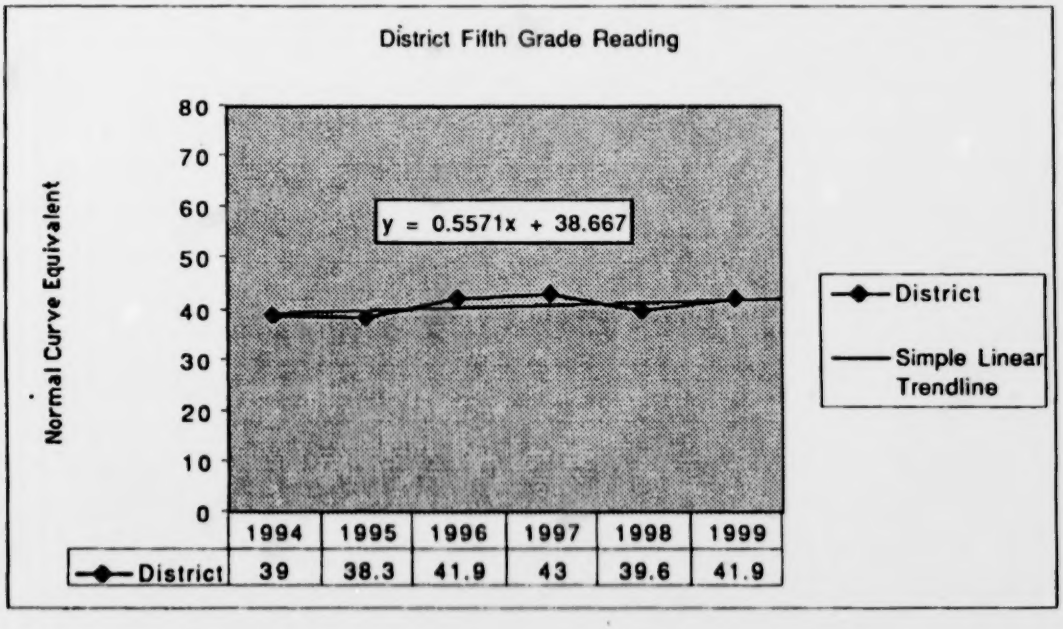
A3. Standardized Achievement Test Scores in Reading (Gadsden Schools)

Havana Elementary and Gadsden District Schools





Interpretation: Over a six-year period fifth grade students at Havana Elementary School had a reading regression coefficient or slope that was higher than that of the District indicating that Havana was progressing at a slightly faster rate than those of seven Gadsden schools altogether.

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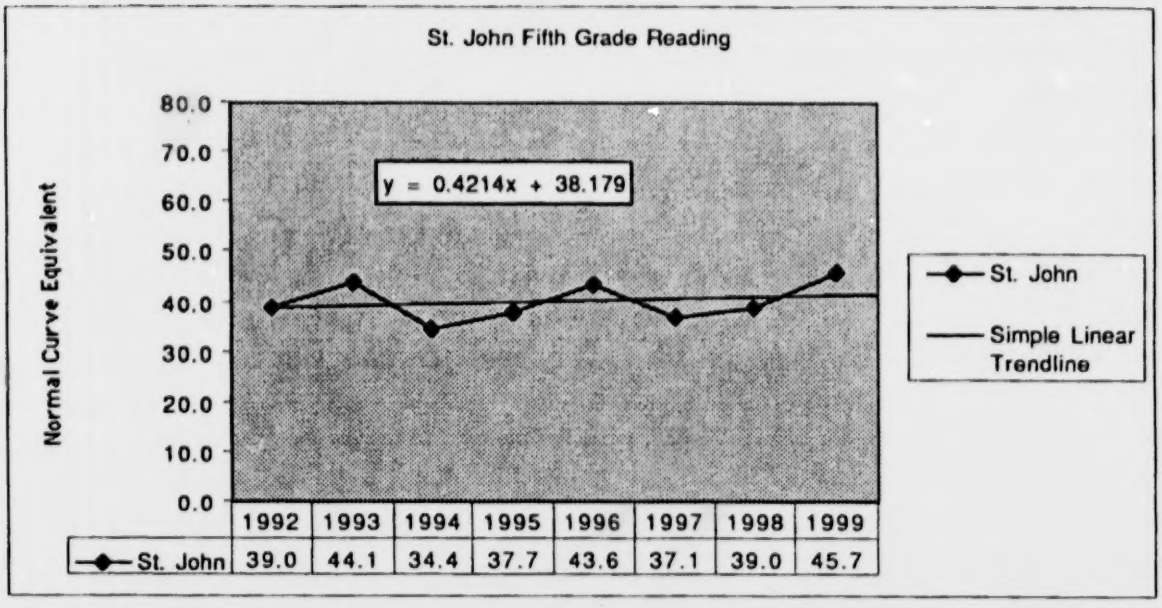
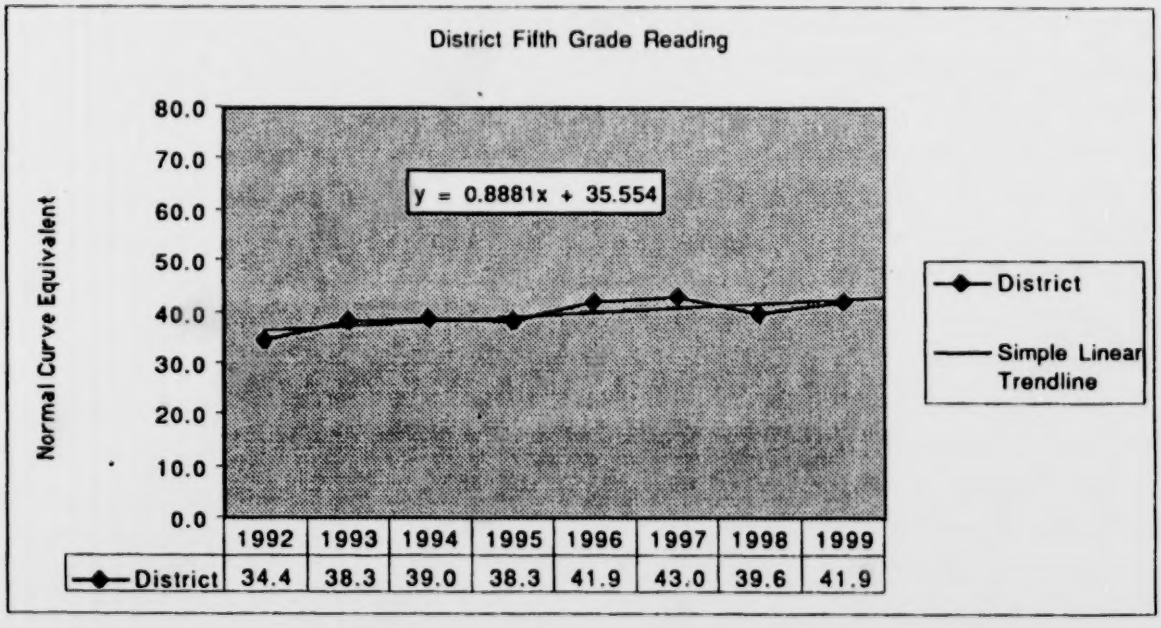
St. John Elementary and Gadsden District Schools



	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
St. John	39.0	44.1	34.4	37.7	43.6	37.1	39.0	45.7



	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
District	34.4	38.3	39.0	38.3	41.9	43.0	39.6	41.9

Interpretation: Over an eight-year period, the graph for St. John showed that the fifth grade scores were very unstable. The slope indicated that the St. John fifth grade reading scores were improving at a slower rate than the District's fifth grade scores

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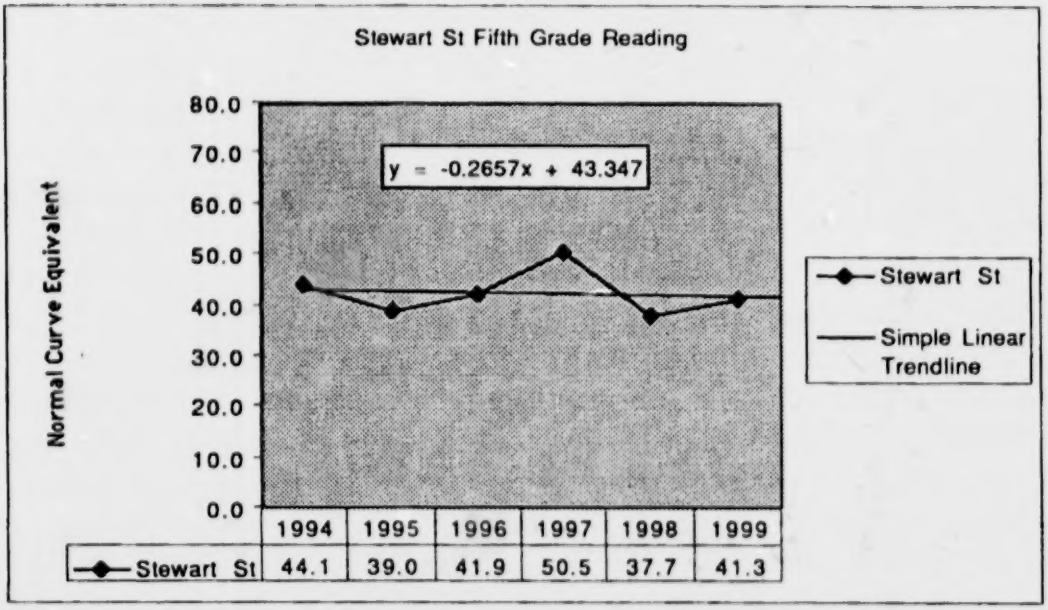
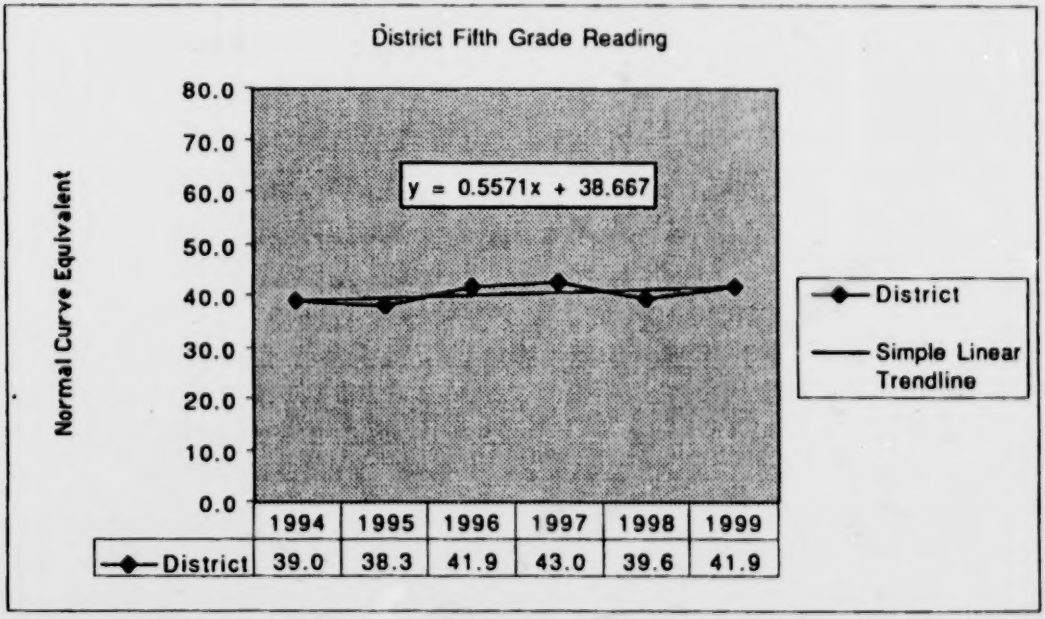
Stewart St. Elementary and Gadsden District





Interpretation: Stewart St Elementary fifth grade reading scores were initially a few percentage points higher than that of the District. The lower scores in 1998 and 1999 produced a slightly negative slope projecting values that approximated projected values for the District.

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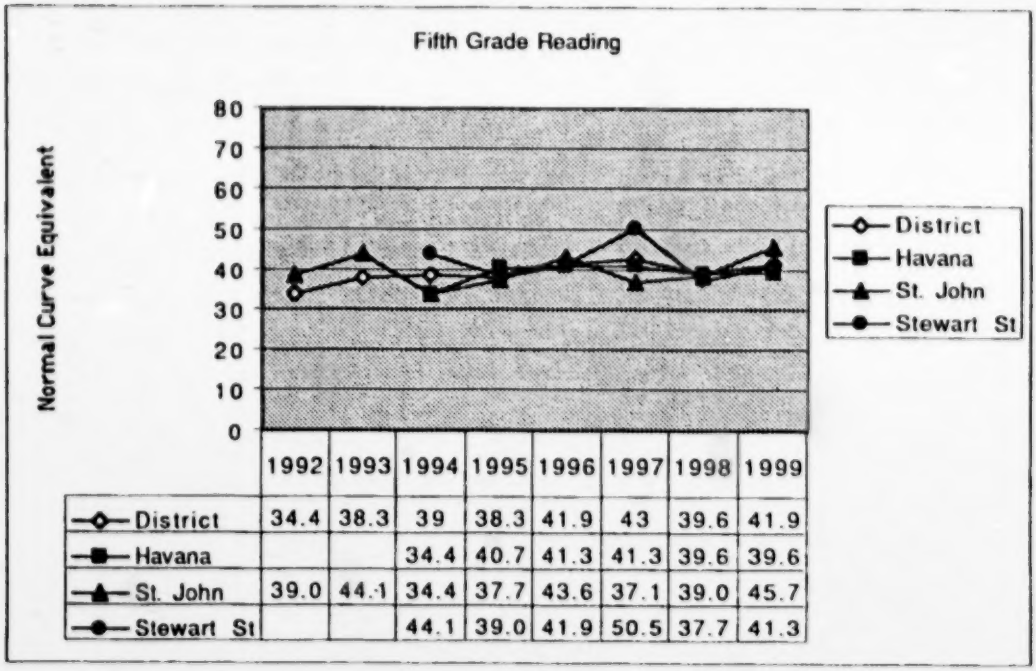
Comparison of the Reading Scores of Gadsden Accelerated Schools and the Seven Gadsden Elementary Schools Altogether



	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
District	34.4	38.3	39	38.3	41.9	43	39.6	41.9
Havana			34.4	40.7	41.3	41.3	39.6	39.6
St. John	39.0	44.1	34.4	37.7	43.6	37.1	39.0	45.7
Stewart St			44.1	39.0	41.9	50.5	37.7	41.3

Interpretation: The reading scores of the Gadsden Accelerated Schools, despite variations, generally appeared to be progressing at the same rate as the elementary schools in the county.

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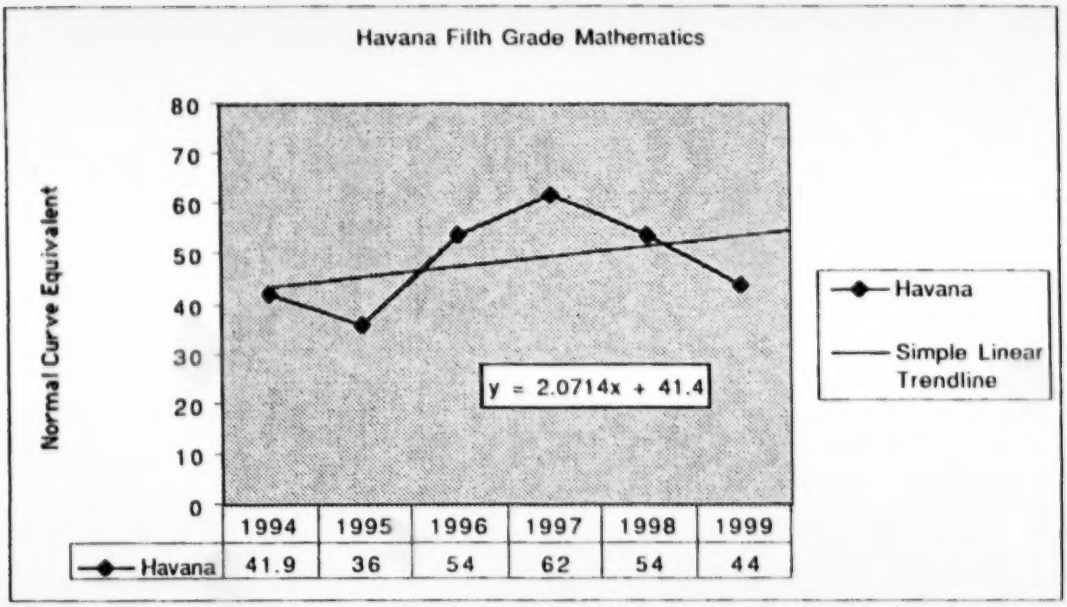
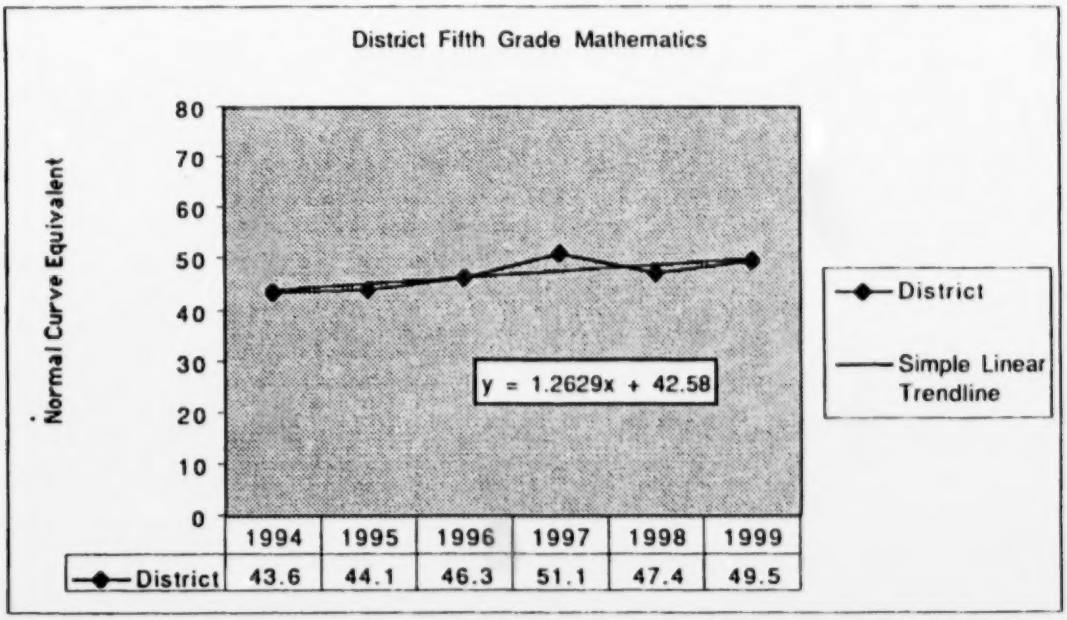
A4. Standardized Achievement Test Scores in Mathematics (Gadsden Schools)

Havana Elementary and Gadsden District





Interpretation: Fifth grade students at Havana Elementary School over a period of six years were unstable but showed a higher regression coefficient indicating that the fifth grade math scores were improving at a faster rate than those of the seven Gadsden elementary schools altogether.

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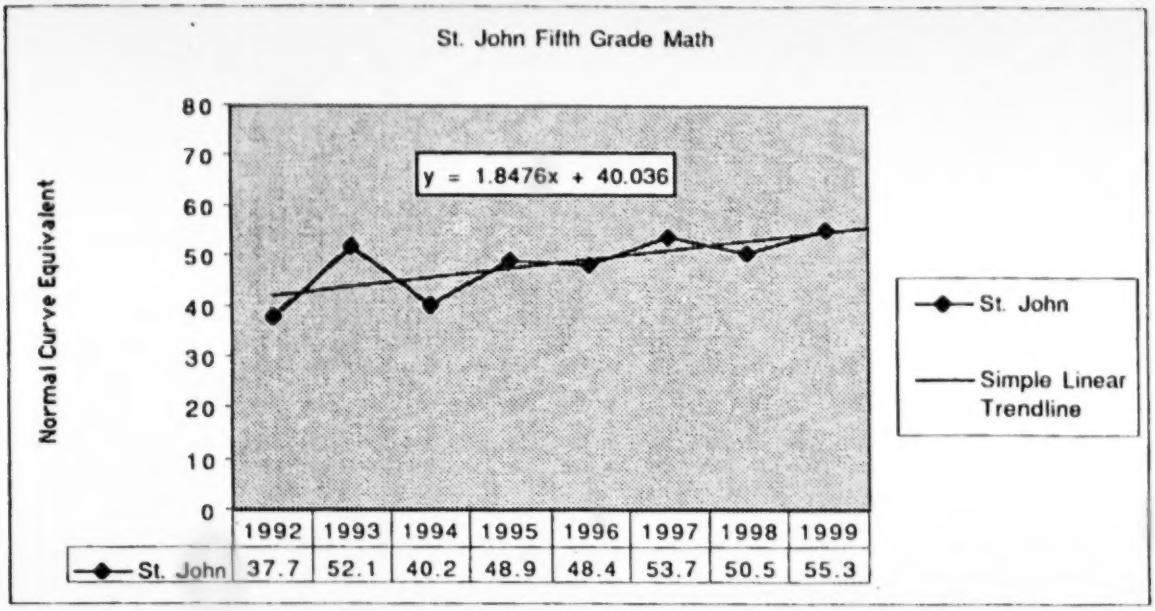

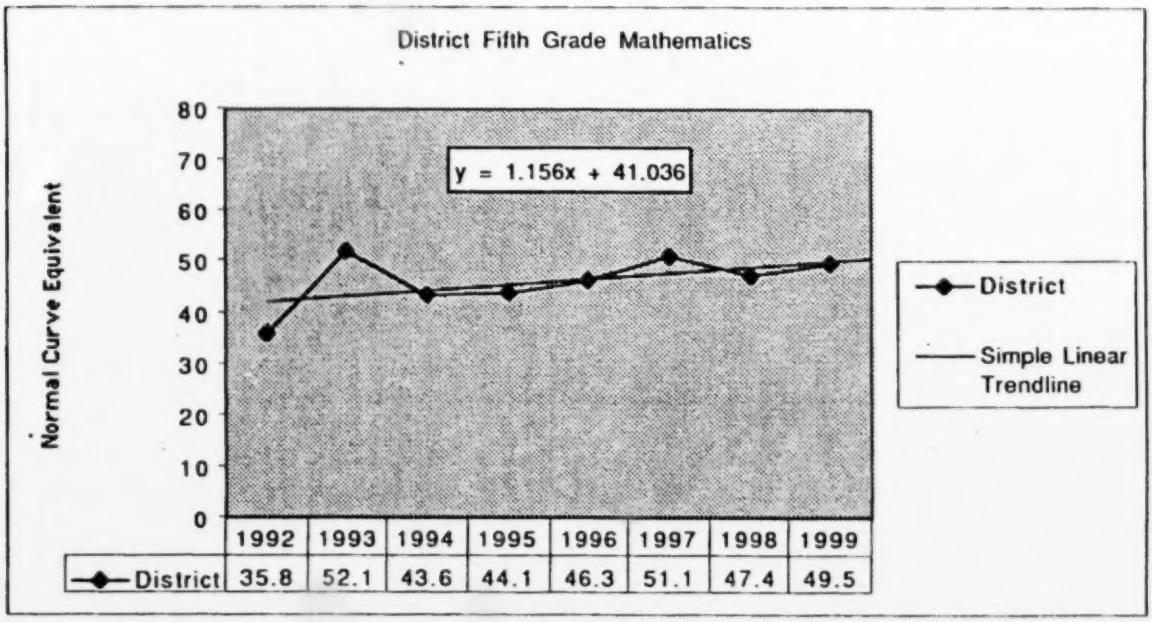

Interpretation: Fifth grade scores at St. John over a period of eight years showed a higher regression coefficient than that of the seven Gadsden schools altogether which showed faster improvement than the district's elementary school scores. Scores above the 50th percentile from 1997-1999 indicated that students were in the educational mainstream.

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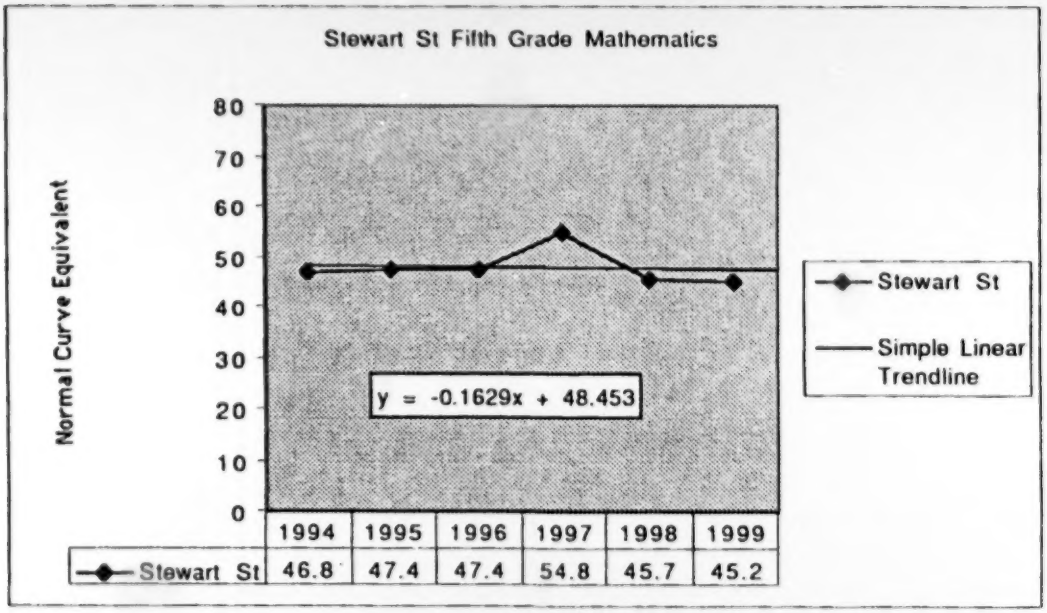
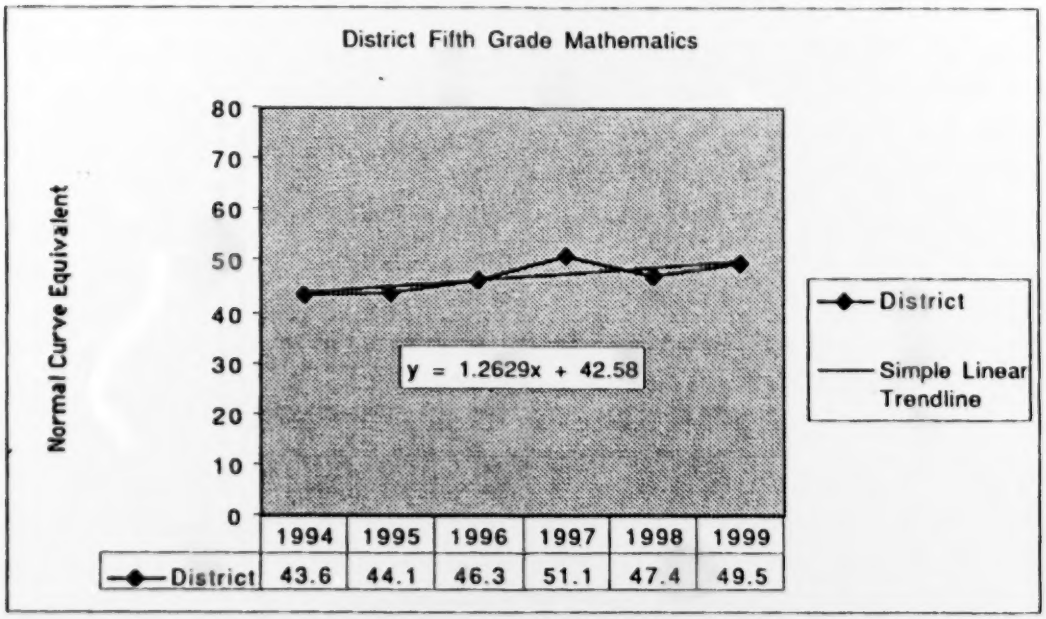
Stewart St. Elementary and Gadsden District





Interpretation: The fifth grade mathematics scores of Stewart St. Elementary started out with scores higher than the District's fifth grade scores as indicated by the 11-point difference in the y-intercept. The regression coefficient was slightly negative due to depressed scores in 1998 and 1999.

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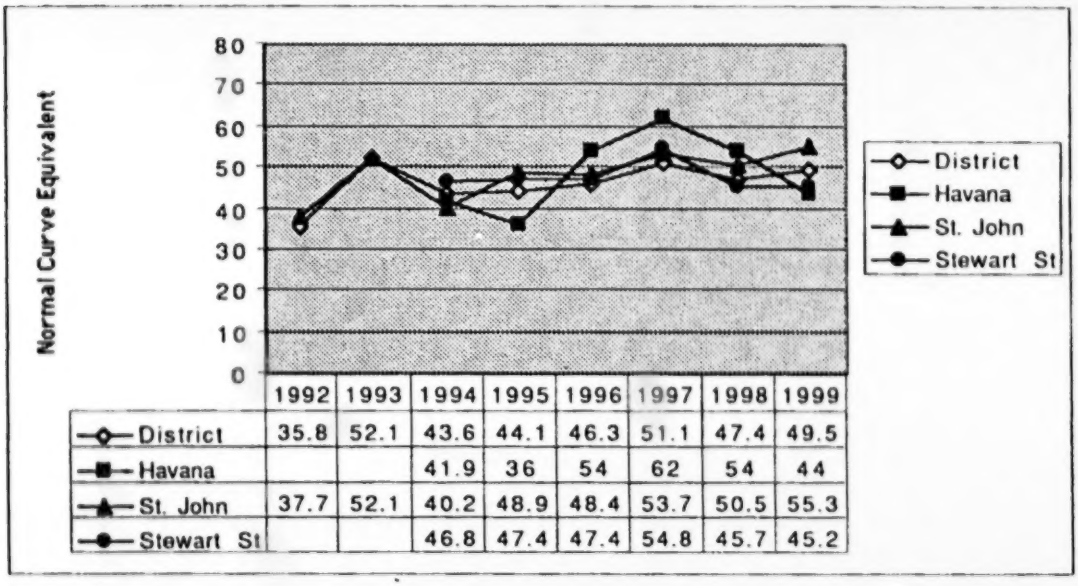
Comparison of the Mathematics Scores of Gadsden Accelerated Schools and the Seven Gadsden Elementary Schools Altogether



	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
District	35.8	52.1	43.6	44.1	46.3	51.1	47.4	49.5
Havana			41.9	36	54	62	54	44
St. John	37.7	52.1	40.2	48.9	48.4	53.7	50.5	55.3
Stewart St			46.8	47.4	47.4	54.8	45.7	45.2

Interpretation: There is variability in the mathematics scores of the Accelerated Schools. St. John demonstrated a steady improvement from 1994 through 1999. Havana Elementary appeared to be most affected when the district changed tests from CTBS to Terra Nova in 1998.

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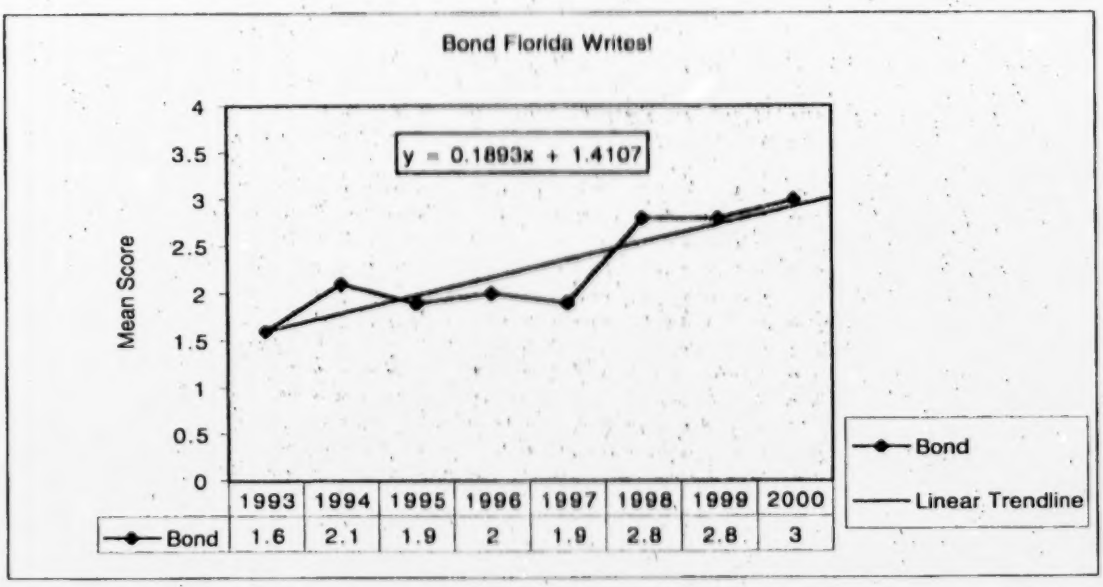
B. Florida Writes!

Writing skills of Florida fourth grade students are measured by means of the evaluation of the expository and the narrative writing samples according to the Florida Writes! rubrics. Regression lines were derived for the fourth grade Florida Writes! scores of the four accelerated schools starting with data from the year prior to entry into the Accelerated Schools movement – 1993 for Bond and St. John, and 1995 for Havana and Stewart St. Scores were graphed through 2001 for Gadsden Accelerated Schools only. Bond did not receive coaching during the 2000-2001 school year so that its chart extended only to 2000.

The Florida Writes! graphs for each of the Accelerated Schools were compared with the graphs of the Florida Writes! scores of the elementary schools in their respective districts. Additionally, the graph for Bond Elementary School was also compared with Leonard Wesson Elementary, a neighboring school with a similar student population.

B1. Comparison of the Fourth Grade Florida Writes! Scores of Bond Elementary, Wesson Elementary and Leon District



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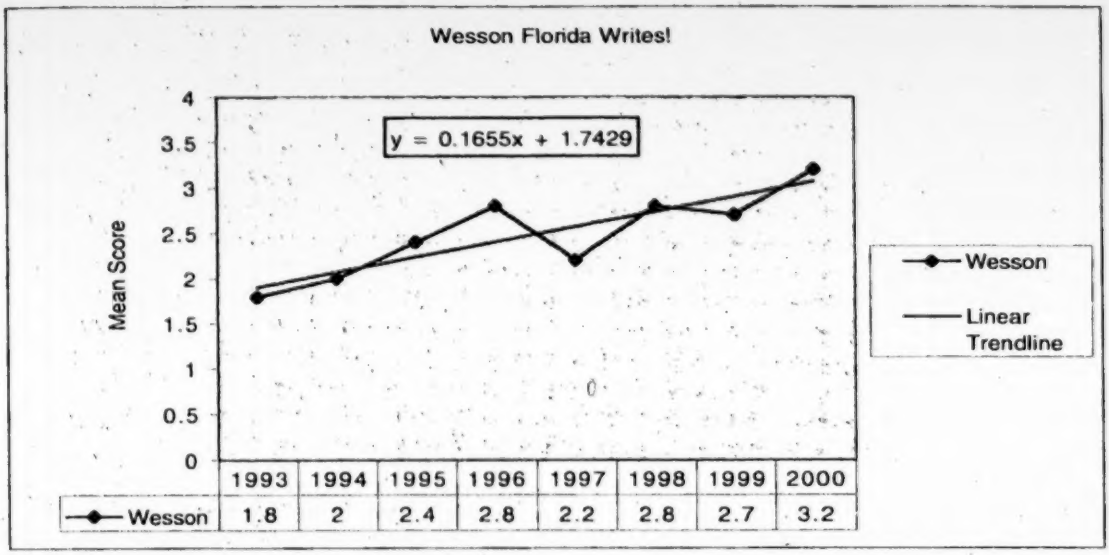
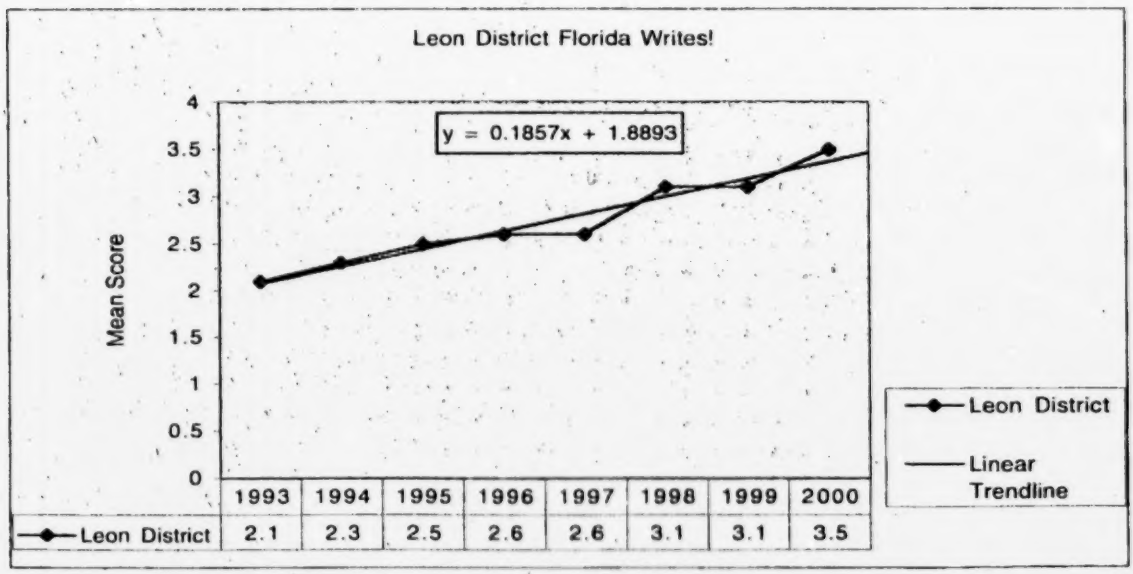


	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Wesson	1.8	2	2.4	2.8	2.2	2.8	2.7	3.2



	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Leon District	2.1	2.3	2.5	2.6	2.6	3.1	3.1	3.5

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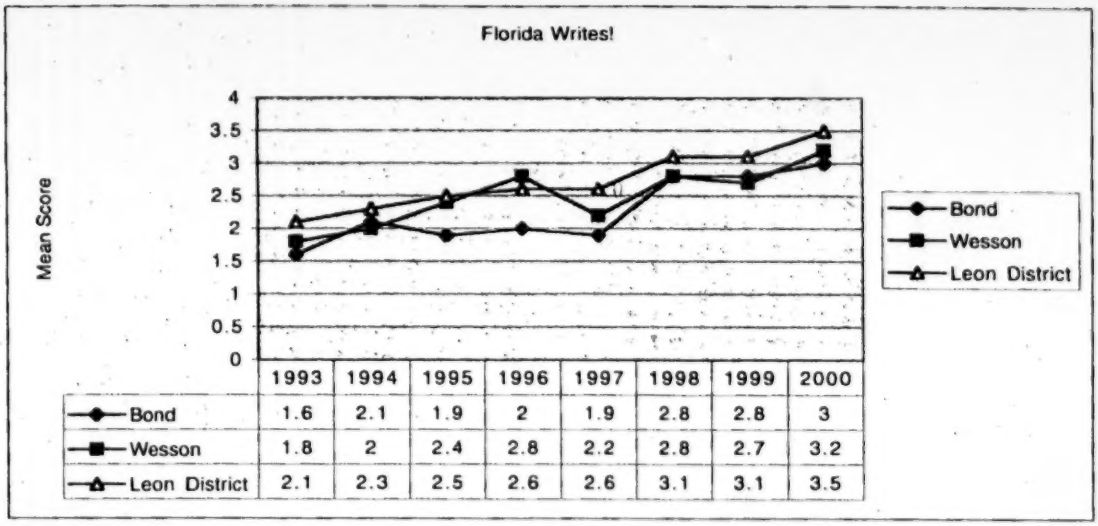

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Bond	1.6	2.1	1.9	2	1.9	2.8	2.8	3
Wesson	1.8	2	2.4	2.8	2.2	2.8	2.7	3.2
Leon District	2.1	2.3	2.5	2.6	2.6	3.1	3.1	3.5

Interpretation: Florida Writes! scores of Bond were lower than the scores of the District or Wesson. However, the regression coefficient for Bond was higher than that of Wesson and also slightly higher than that of the District indicating that the scores were improving at a faster rate.

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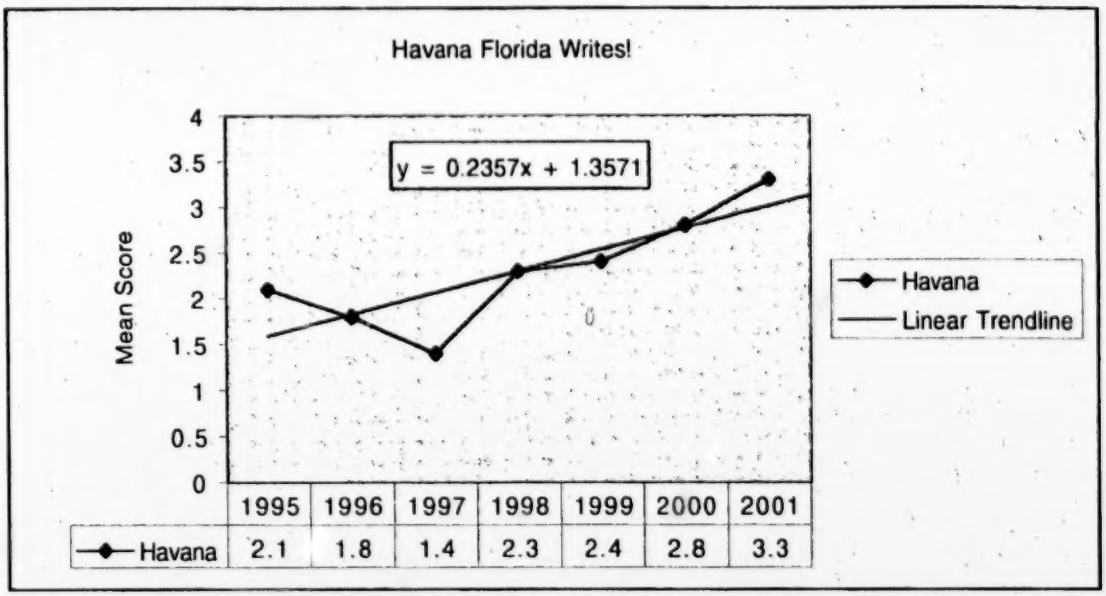
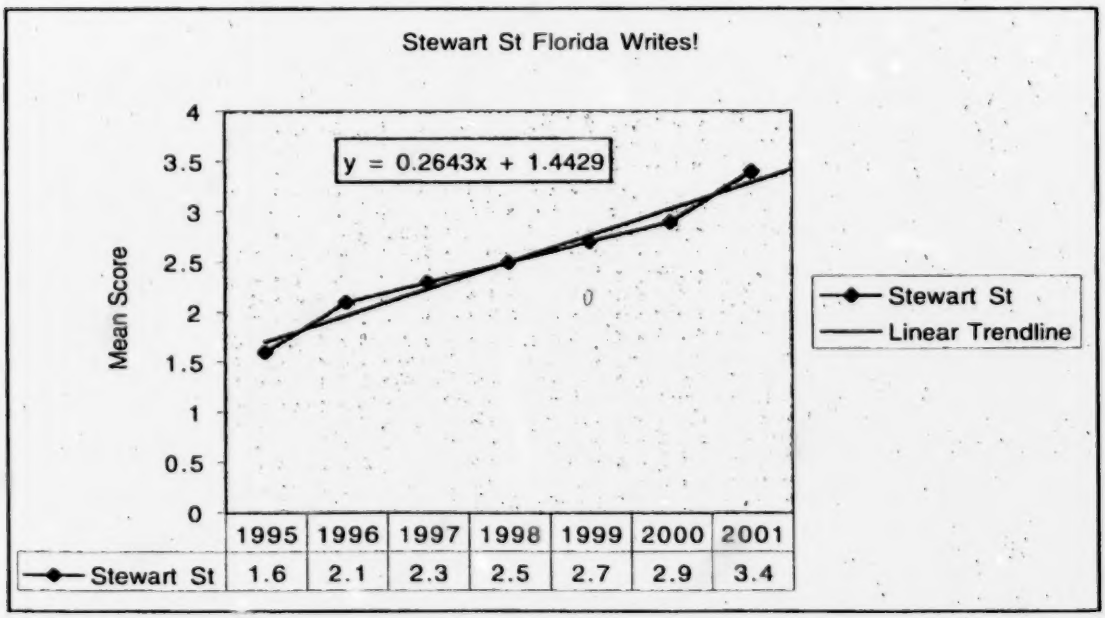
B2. Comparison of the Fourth Grade Florida Writes! Scores of Havana Elementary, St. John Elementary and Stewart St. Elementary With the Seven Elementary Schools in Gadsden District Altogether





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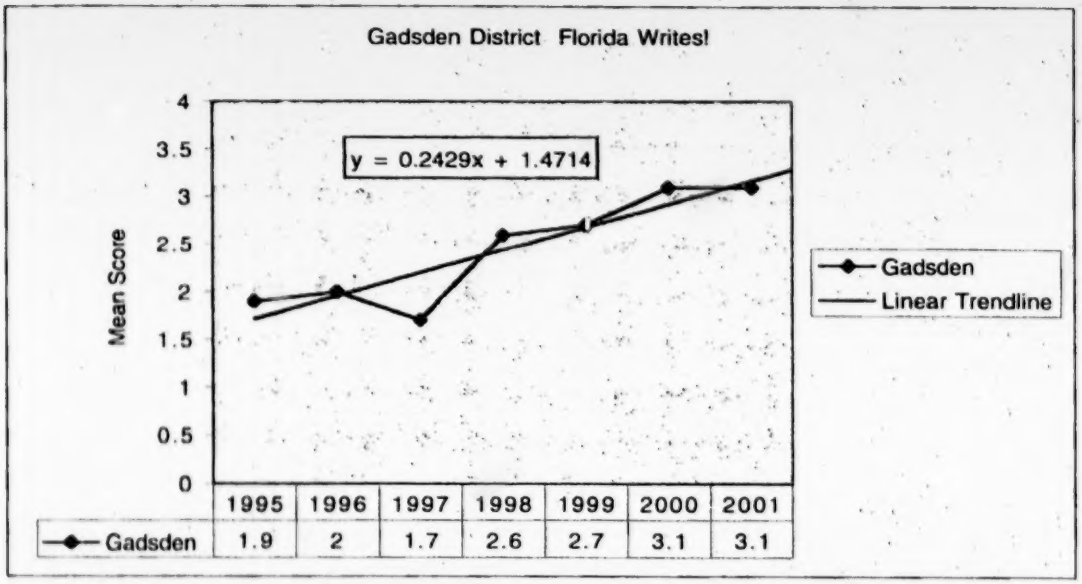

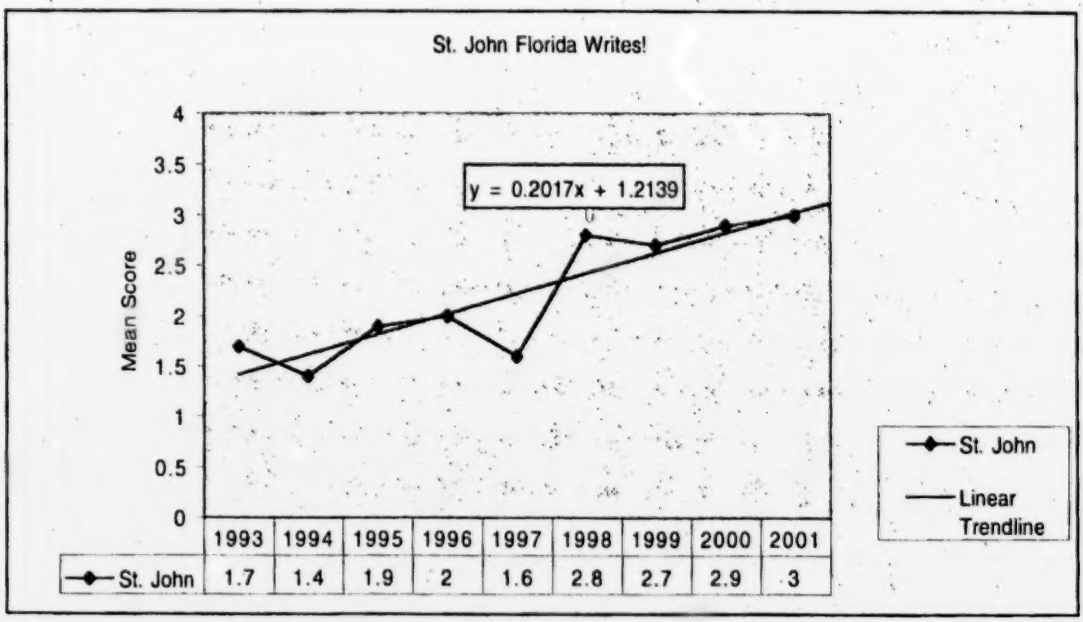

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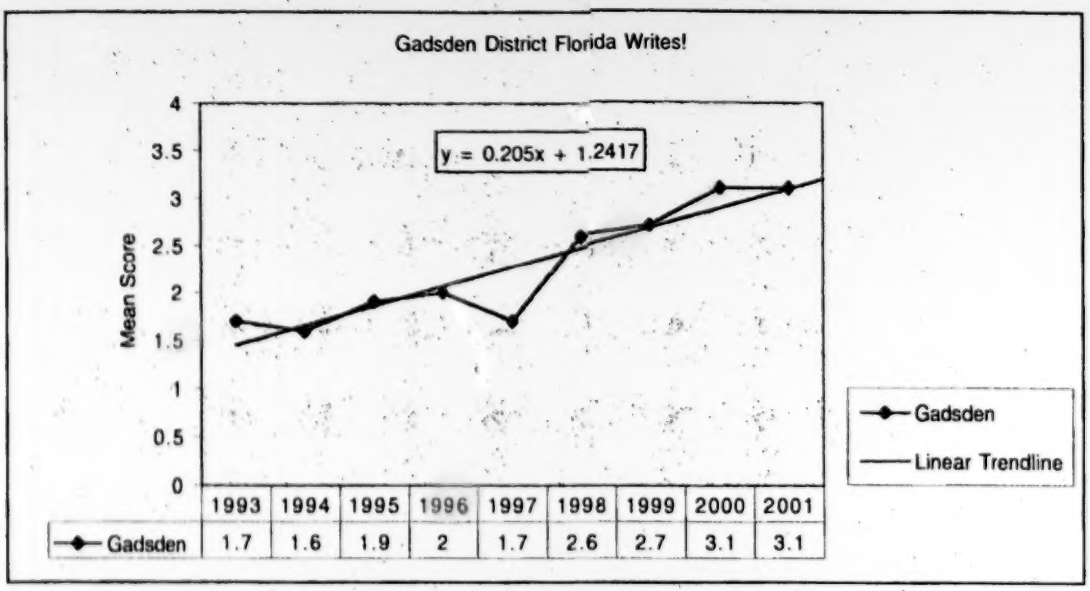
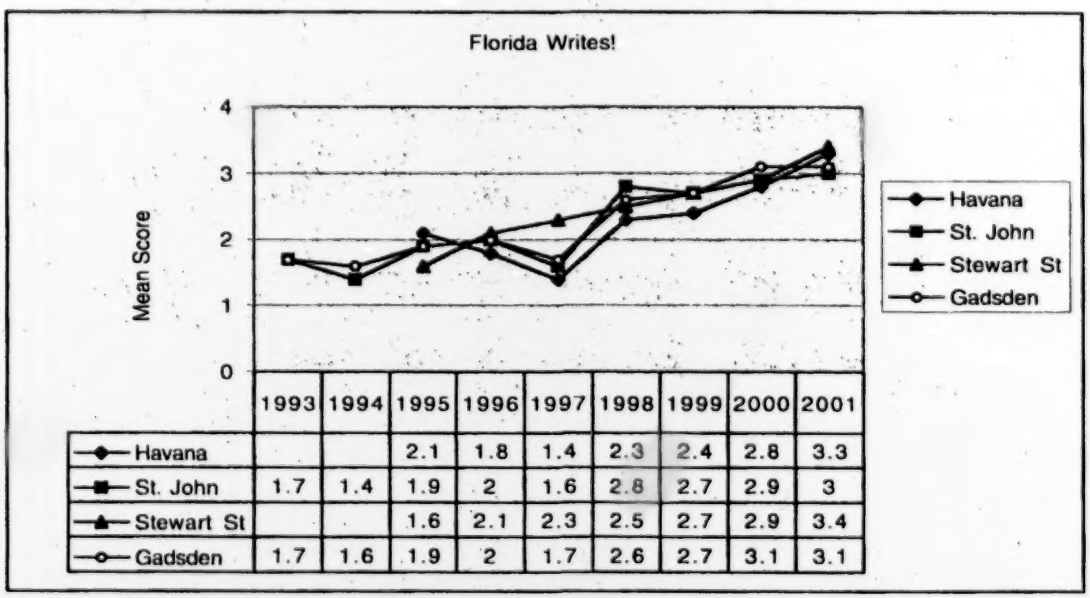


	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Gadsden	1.7	1.6	1.9	2	1.7	2.6	2.7	3.1	3.1



	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Havana			2.1	1.8	1.4	2.3	2.4	2.8	3.3
St. John	1.7	1.4	1.9	2	1.6	2.8	2.7	2.9	3
Stewart St			1.6	2.1	2.3	2.5	2.7	2.9	3.4
Gadsden	1.7	1.6	1.9	2	1.7	2.6	2.7	3.1	3.1

Interpretation: Florida Writes! scores of Stewart St. were increasing at a faster rate than the District's fourth graders while those of Havana and St. John were increasing at a slightly slower rate.

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C. FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test)

The FCAT in Reading was administered to fourth graders and the FCAT in Mathematics to fifth graders throughout the state starting in 1998. School achievement was measured using mean scaled scores.

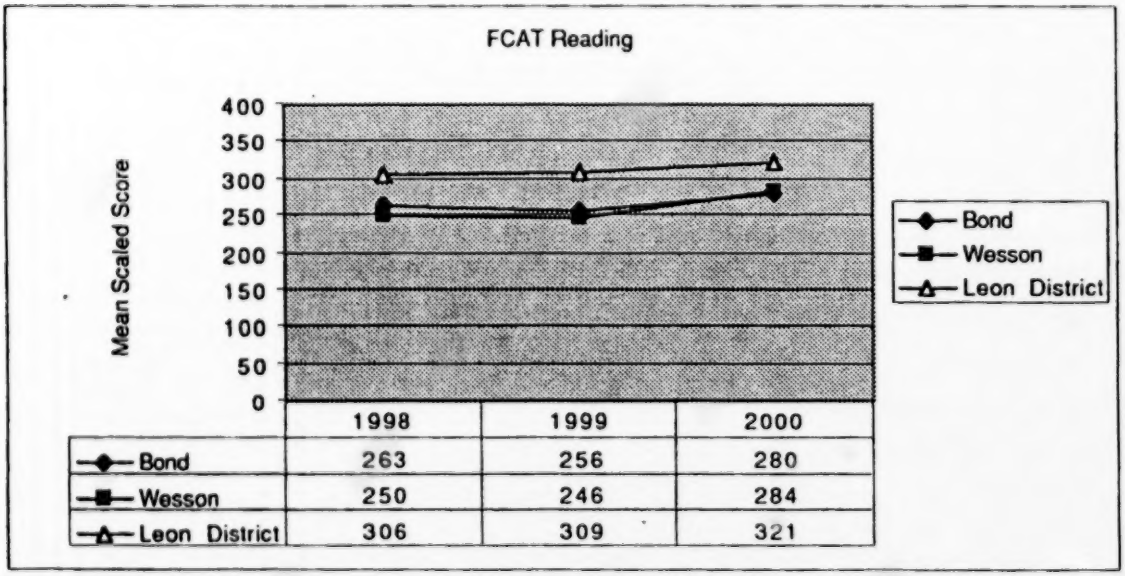
FCAT scores were graphed for the four Accelerated Schools from 1998 through 2001 with the exception of Bond. Bond was not coached during the school year 2000-2001 so the data for the school extended through 2000.

The graphs in reading and mathematics for each Accelerated School were compared with the graphs of the district scores. Additionally, the graphs for Bond were also compared with Leonard Wesson Elementary, a neighboring school with a similar student population.

Graphs for Leon District were based on standard curriculum students while Gadsden District graphs were based on all curriculum students. The 2001 standard scores were not available from the Florida Department of Education when this report was prepared so the data for all curriculum students was used. All curriculum student data included limited English proficient (LEP) students and students in the exceptional student education program in addition to the standard student data.

C1. FCAT Achievement Scores in Reading (Leon District)

Bond, Wesson and Leon District (Standard Curriculum Students)



	1998	1999	2000
Bond	263	256	280
Wesson	250	246	284
Leon District	306	309	321

Interpretation: Bond and Wesson scores were lower than the district scores but the gap between the 2 schools and the District decreased in 2000.

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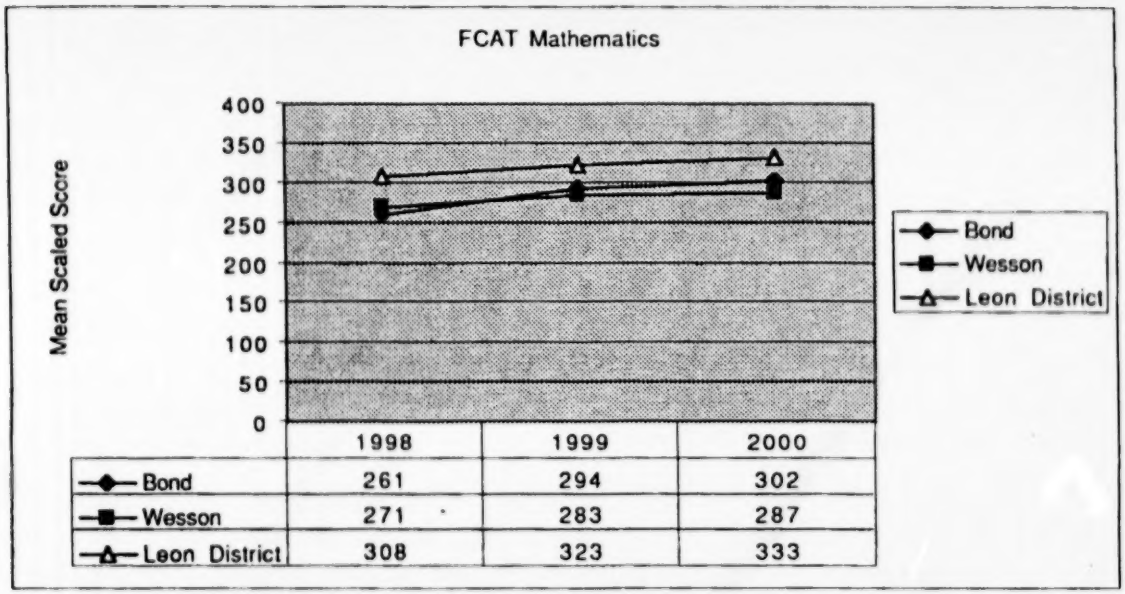
C2. FCAT Achievement Scores in Mathematics (Leon District)

Bond, Wesson and Leon District (Standard Curriculum Students)



	1998	1999	2000
Bond	261	294	302
Wesson	271	283	287
Leon District	308	323	333

Interpretation: Bond started with FCAT fifth grade mathematics scores slightly lower than the scores for the District or Wesson. However, the gap between the scores of Bond and the District became smaller faster than the gap between Wesson and the District.

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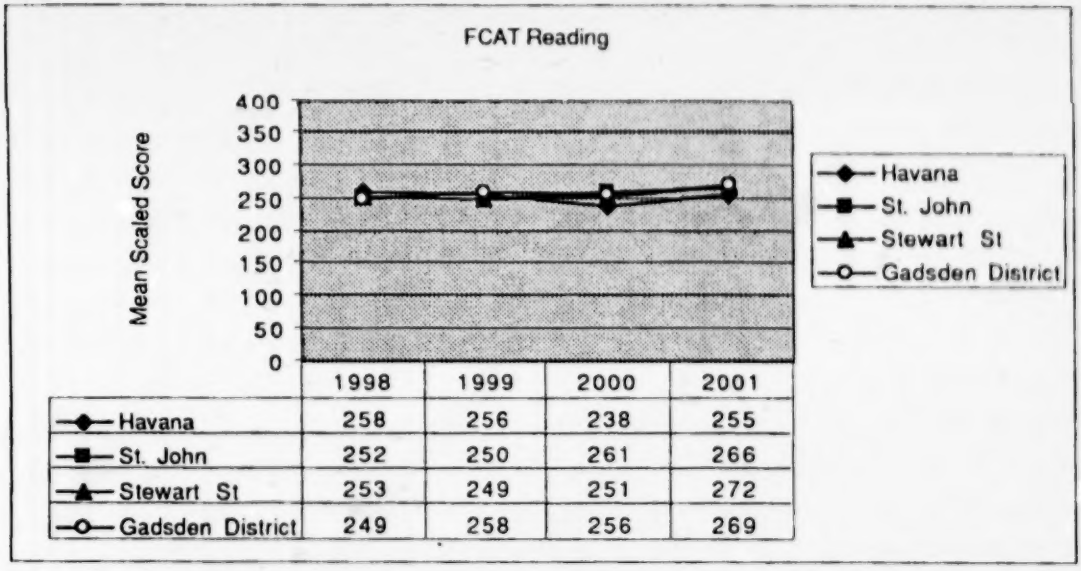
C3. FCAT Achievement Scores in Reading (Gadsden District)

Havana, St. John, Stewart St. and Gadsden District (All Curriculum Students)



	1998	1999	2000	2001
Havana	258	256	238	255
St. John	252	250	261	266
Stewart St	253	249	251	272
Gadsden District	249	258	256	269

Interpretation: Reading scores of the Gadsden Accelerated Schools were comparable with the Gadsden schools altogether. Differentiation of scores was noticeable in 2000 and 2001 with Stewart St. leading the others.

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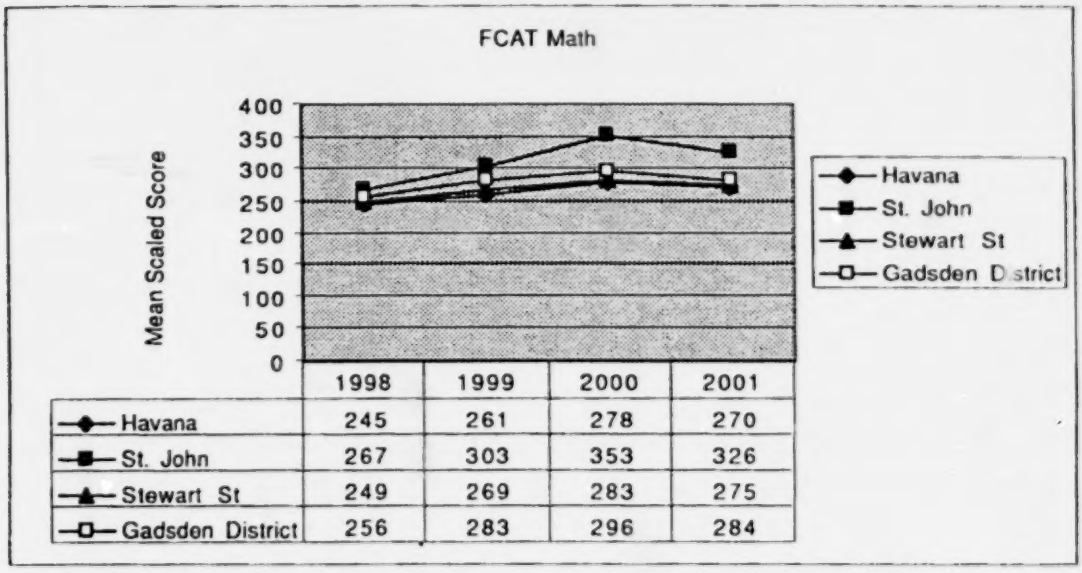
C4. FCAT Achievement Scores in Mathematics (Gadsden District)

Havana, St. John, Stewart St. and Gadsden District (All Curriculum Students)



	1998	1999	2000	2001
Havana	245	261	278	270
St. John	267	303	353	326
Stewart St	249	269	283	275
Gadsden District	256	283	296	284

Interpretation: St. John scores were significantly better than the other Accelerated Schools or the District's fifth graders as a whole from 1998 to 2001. A trend toward slight improvement from 1998 through 2001 was observed for Havana and Stewart St.

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SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENT DATA

A. COMPARISON OF NORMAL CURVE EQUIVALENT SCORES

1. Reading	Reading First Year	Reading Last Year	Difference	Decreased Gap With District?	Improvement Rate Reading (Slope)	Mainstream Reading
Bond Accelerated School	33.7	50.5	16.8	Yes	2.51	Yes
Wesson (Comparison School)	37.7	47.9	10.2		1.61	No
District	52.6	65.6	13		2.10	Yes
St. John Accelerated School	39.0	45.7	6.7	Better than District	0.42	No
District	34.4	41.9	7.5		0.89	No
Havana Accelerated School	34.4	39.6	5.2	Yes	0.65	No
Stewart St Accelerated School	44.1	41.3	-2.8	Yes(-)*	-0.27	No
District	39	41.9	2.9		0.56	No

2. Mathematics	Math First Year	Math Last Year	Difference	Decreased Gap With District?	Improvement Rate Math (Slope)	Mainstream Math
Bond Accelerated School	46.3	62.9	16.6	Yes	2.63	Yes
Wesson (Comparison School)	38.3	56.4	18.1		2.75	Yes
District	54.8	65.6	10.8		1.64	Yes
St. John Accelerated School	37.7	55.3	17.6	Better than District	1.85	Yes
District	35.8	49.5	13.7		1.16	No
Havana Accelerated School	41.9	44	2.1	No	2.07	No
Stewart St Accelerated School	46.8	45.2	-1.6	No	-0.16	No
District	43.6	49.5	5.9		1.26	No

*Stewart St. had better scores than the district and a decrease in scores brought their scores closer to the scores of the district.

B. COMPARISON OF FCAT SCORES

	Math First Year	Math Last Year	Diff	Decreased Gap with District?	Reading First Year	Reading Last Year	Difference	Decreased Gap With District?
Bond Accelerated School	261	302	41	Yes	263	280	17	Yes
Wesson (Comparison School)	271	287	16		250	284	34	
District	308	333	25		306	321	15	
St. John Accelerated School	267	326	59	Better than District	252	266	14	No
District	256	284	28		249	269	20	
Havana Accelerated School	245	270	25	No	258	255	-3	No
Stewart St Accelerated School	249	275	26	No	253	272	19	Better than District
District	256	284	28		249	269	20	

C. COMPARISON OF FLORIDA WRITES SCORES

	First Year	Last Year	Diff	Decreased Gap with District?
Bond Accelerated School	1.6	3.0	1.4	Same
Wesson (Comparison School)	1.8	3.2	1.4	Same
District	2.1	3.5	1.4	
St. John Accelerated School	1.7	3.0	1.3	No
District	1.7	3.1	1.4	
Havana Accelerated School	2.1	3.3	1.2	Same
Stewart St Accelerated School	1.6	3.4	1.8	Yes
District	1.9	3.1	1.2	

There was ample data to show that the student achievement of the Accelerated Schools improved since the project was launched at the respective schools. In many instances, achievement rate was the same as or better than that of the district or the comparison school. All schools show mathematics as a strength and reading as a challenge.

The standardized achievement rate of Bond was better than that of the District in reading and mathematics and better than Wesson in reading. It was worth noting that the standardized test scores of Bond indicated that the fifth grade students were in the mainstream by1999. Additionally, Bond decreased the gap between its FCAT Math and its FCAT Reading scores and those of the District.

The Accelerated Schools in Gadsden County also demonstrated significant improvements in many areas. The rate of increase (regression slope) in the reading standardized achievement scores of St. John and Havana was better than the District's fifth graders as a whole decreasing the achievement gap. St. John's standardized mathematics scores exceeded the scores of the District's fifth graders as a whole from 1995 through 1999. It is commendable that St. John fifth graders were in the mainstream in mathematics since 1997. Although Havana's scores were lower than the District's in reading and mathematics, its improvement rates in these areas were faster than the District's.

FCAT scores in mathematics of St. John were significantly better than the District's fifth grade scores from 1998 through 2001. The FCAT score in reading of Stewart St. was better than the Districts fifth grade scores in 2001.

The Florida Writes scores of Havana and Stewart St in 2001 were better than the scores of the District's fourth graders. Florida Writes scores of Stewart St. demonstrated remarkable improvement since 1995.

6. ***What benefits and barriers exist (local, district, school) that help and hinder implementation of the Accelerated Schools Process (ASP)?***

The greatest accolade for the benefits of the ASP was expressed by one of the teachers, *"These students became 'our' students and this school became 'our' school, not 'mine'."* Other benefits were expressed as all members of the ASP school communities (parents, local organizations, teachers, staff and students) were given the opportunity to reflect over the last eight years of implementation. Accelerated School communities shared a set of values, beliefs and attitudes that contributed to creating a culture for growth, creativity and accelerated learning. These values undergirded every aspect of the Accelerated Schools philosophy, process and daily practices. The following benefits were analyzed and reflected upon using some of these values as building blocks.

COMMUNITY SPIRIT, COMMUNICATION and COLLABORATION

The ASP model required total community buy-in and allowed for every member of the school community to get involved, develop a common vision and through productive communication and sharing of resources, to bring that vision closer to reality. This teamwork empowered members and allowed the schools to work smarter, not harder, to meet their expectations and goals. Collaborative decision-making was far-reaching as indicated by the closely knit network consisting of the Director and coaches who were members of FAMU faculty, other coaches and mentors who were Leon and Gadsden district personnel, and facilitators who were school staff members that served as liaisons between the coaches and the school. This diverse group, along with strong school leadership, and support from the district offices, the National Center and community leaders helped remove existing limitations and provided support services in the areas of information, technical assistance, staff development and assessment.

EXPERIMENTATION and DISCOVERY, RISKTAKING and REFLECTION

Adopting the ASP allowed the schools the benefits of experimenting with new programs, curriculum and learning models. After challenges were established, research action plans were developed in coordination with Florida School Improvement Plans and Southern Association for Colleges and Schools requirements. Organizational skills were developed as regularly scheduled meetings (with agendas and minutes) were held and reflection became an integral part of the process. A variety of collaborative groups (grade level, curriculum, cadres and steering) allowed opportunities for professional growth, to build on individual strengths and to develop new communication and leadership skills.

Professional development, travel opportunities, workshops, additional planning time and more flexibility allowed the staff of all ASP schools to see new programs, materials and models in action.

This comprehensive school reform model was the impetus for adoption of programs such as Read, Write and Type!, Direct Instruction, SRA, and Accelerated Reader . It also allowed for intra- and inter-school visitations to share Powerful Learning in action as well as the development of videos of active, hands-on student activities emphasizing the teaching of critical thinking skills. Many of these innovations came to fruition as a result of the ASP and have yielded a more positive school climate where **all** school community members took responsibility for **all** students.

> *"Teaching methods and techniques improved as teachers received training and involvement in powerful learning techniques, critical thinking and higher order questioning."*
>
> Mrs. Rosa Barkley
> Principal, Stewart St.
> Accelerated School

Project implementation was not without barriers. Implementation of ASP, like all other innovative reform programs, required extra time, energy and effort. The launch required two full days during preplanning and weekly after-school meetings to complete the stages of taking stock, forging a vision, and the inquiry process. The majority of teacher planning days were also committed to ASP training.

More mature Accelerated Schools continued to hold regular cadre, steering and SAW meetings to address challenges. Success takes time and a lot of work . Many teachers found themselves working outside their comfort zones.

A challenge concerning the staff and total school community was that even after a 90% or more buy-in, some people did not maintain a high level of commitment. Noncompetitive salaries led to staff turnover that was higher than average at some of the schools served. The Accelerated Schools were not as capable as affluent schools in attracting and retaining talented teachers. Frequent re-orientation and re-commitment had to be worked into the training schedules.

Principal turnover was reported to be a major predictor of failure in most reform programs. This too was observed in two of the schools served by the FAMU ASP where the new principals that were hired did not support the project.

Powerful Learning, which included the development of integrated curriculum units, became difficult to implement when time restraints arose resulting from the re-emphasis of basic skills instruction by local, state and national educators. Enriched hands-on activities were often sacrificed in order to prepare students for high-stakes statewide testing.

Teacher accountability for student learning and performance in light of the Sunshine State Standards as evidenced by Student Portfolios, GLE (Grade Level Expectations) checklists, AIPs (Academic Improvement Plans) for students with deficits, IEPs (Individual Educational Plans) for students with special needs, and other reporting

requirements have restricted the time that teachers needed to design and implement innovative classroom practices.

As the Accelerated Schools increased in capacity for systemic reform, they benefited from the process because it enabled them to find creative ways to deal with limited time and resources, to address district and state initiatives, and to streamline demands from competing initiatives. Fostering this capacity at the school level depended and will continue to depend on investments in long-term improvements from the district, state and policymakers instead of creating large rewards and harsh penalties for quick improvements on narrow measures of performance.

CONCLUSION

This report demonstrates that Bond Elementary, Havana Elementary, St. John Elementary and Stewart St. Elementary were well on their way to becoming fully Accelerated Schools. The school communities showed that they were internalizing the principles and practices of the Accelerated Schools Project into the existing school culture. Longitudinal analyses of achievement data provided ample evidence to indicate that the project effected an increasing trend in achievement scores and in some instances, significant achievement increases.

The Accelerated Schools project has had the greatest impact on teachers, staff, parents and administrators in the ways in which the schools were governed. Stakeholders had greater input into decision-making. Many teachers have also improved their teaching strategies as a result of the program. Other benefits included more motivated students, increased achievement, improved discipline, greater faculty morale, empowered stakeholders, and improved communication between faculty and between the faculty and administrators.

Major barriers identified were lack of time for planning and meeting, resistance to change on the part of some stakeholders, low level of parent involvement, and the turnover of administrators and teachers.

The Accelerated Schools Project was designed so that a school that has internalized the principles and the process will be able to "wean" themselves from the coaches and will eventually maintain the process without outside facilitation. It is the expectation of the coaches that the schools will sustain the momentum that was generated and move on to greater heights.

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Signature: Mila E. Ignatz	Printed Name/Position/Title: Dr. Mila Ignatz, Professor & Project Director	
Organization/Address: Accelerated Schools Project College of Education Florida A&M University Tallahassee, Fl 32307-4900	Telephone: (850) 599-3038	Fax: (850) 561-2793
	E-mail Address: ignatz_m@popmail.firn.edu	Date: 5/7/03